

LARGEST WEEKLY CIRCULATION IN AMERICA

TIP TOP WEEKLY

An ideal publication for the American Youth

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"I WILL MELD ONE HUNDRED ACES," SAID THE DOG. "PUT 'EM DOWN, FRANK."

Tip Top Weekly.

(LARGE SIZE.)

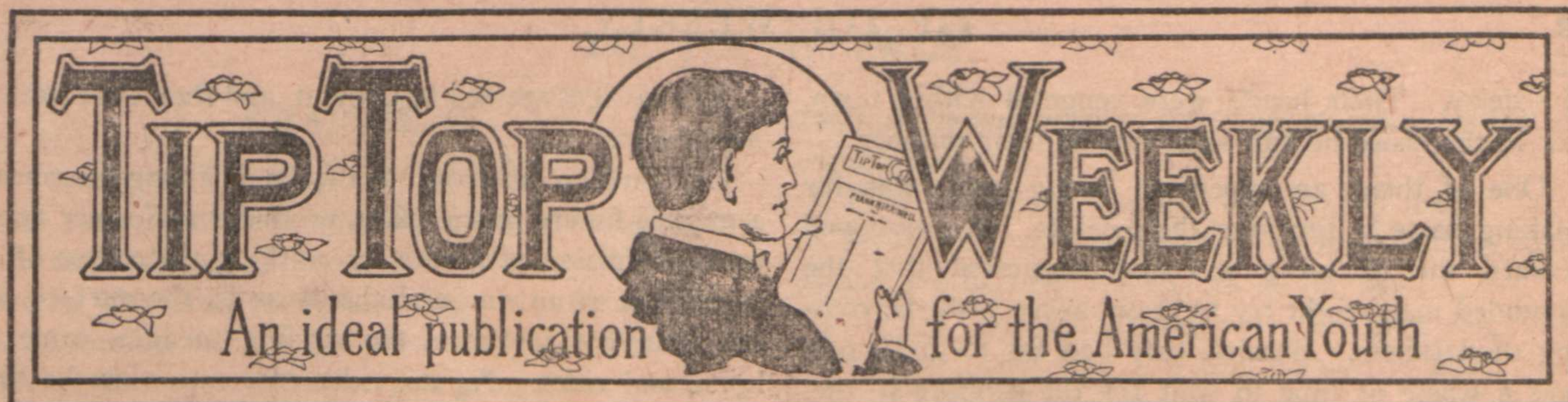
If you have not read them, look over this catalogue and you will read a list of stories unexcelled in any part of this world to-day.

Don't fail to read these stories if you have not already.

- 334—Frank Merriwell's "Ginger;" or, Winning an Uphill Game.
- 335—Dick Merriwell's Stroke; or, Unmasking the Man of Mystery.
- 336—Frank Merriwell's Winners; or, Landing on Top in Mad River League.
- 337—Dick Merriwell's Return; or, Back Again to the Old School.
- 338—Dick Merriwell's Difficulties; or, Making Up the Eleven.
- 339—Dick Merriwell's Mercy; or, The First Game on the Gridiron.
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- 342—Dick Merriwell's Ability; or, The Young Gladiators of the Gridiron.
- 343—Dick Merriwell's Mascot; or, By Luck or Pluck.
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- 348—Dick Merriwell's Trap; or, Snaring a Spook.
- 349—Dick Merriwell's Vim; or, The Greatest Game of All.
- 350—Dick Merriwell's Lark; or, Beaten at Every Turn.
- 351—Dick Merriwell's Defense; or, Up Against the Great Eaton Five.
- 352—Dick Merriwell's Dexterity; or, Hot Work to the Finish.
- 353—Dick Merriwell Puzzled; or, The Mystery of Flint.
- 354—Dick Merriwell's Help; or, Flint's Struggle with Himself.
- 355—Dick Merriwell's Model; or, Frank Merriwell's Fight for Fortune.
- 356—Dick Merriwell as Detective; or, For the Honor of a Friend.
- 357—Dick Merriwell's Dirk; or, Beset by Hidden Peril.
- 358—Dick Merriwell's Victory; or, Holding the Enemy in Check.
- 359—Dick Merriwell, Absent! or, The Spook of the School.
- 360—Dick Merriwell's Registered Package; or, Frank Merriwell's Desperate Struggle.
- 361—Dick Merriwell's Power; or, Settling the Score with Eaton.
- 362—Frank Merriwell's Defense; or, The Struggle for the Queen Mystery Mine.
- 363—Dick Merriwell's Dream; or, Foiling the Bank Breakers.
- 364—Frank Merriwell's Backers; or, Old Friends to the Rescue.
- 365—Dick Merriwell's Duty; or, True to Old Fardale.
- 366—Frank Merriwell's Talking Dog; or, Faithful unto Death.
- 367—Dick Merriwell on the Diamond; or, The Boy Wonder's Backstop.

With TIP TOP No. 285 begins the now famous Fardale Series, in which Dick Merriwell has entered the good old school at which the career of Frank Merriwell also began some years ago. Thousands of young Americans will want to read of the fine things that Dick Merriwell has done, is doing and will in the future do.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, . . . 238 William St., New York.



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FRANK MERRIWELL'S TALKING DOG;

OR,

Faithful Unto Death.

By BURT L. STANDISH.

CHAPTER I.

THE WARWHOOPE OF OLD ELI.

The afternoon sun lay scorching hot upon the arid plain. Heat waves moved in the air like the billows of a phantom sea. To the west were barren mountain peaks and the nearer foothills; to the east the unbroken plain lay level to the horizon.

Behind the body of his dead horse lay the sorely wounded man, with his dog crouching close at his side. The dog's dry tongue lolled from the animal's mouth; at times the poor creature whined and sought to lick the hand of its master; anon he growled fiercely, the hair bristling on his neck, and started up in a savage manner.

"Down, Boxer, down!" the man would order, in a voice ever growing weaker. "You can't help. The red devils will get you with a bullet. Down, sir!"

At which the dog would sink back, whine again and draw his file-like tongue along the hand or cheek of his master.

"Heavens!" muttered the man. "For a swallow of water. I'd give the last ounce in the saddle bags if I could finish one or two more of those murderous curs before I cash in!"

His almost nerveless hands grasped the hot barrel of his rifle, and he looked away toward the spot where six horsemen had drawn up in a little cluster just beyond bullet-reach.

They were Indians, mounted on tough, unhandsome ponies, and some of them armed with modern weapons. Two or three carried lances, on which the glaring sun glinted.

They had hunted him down; they had killed the horse beneath him and wounded him unto death. The bullet was through his body, and the sands of life were ebbing fast. He had reached the end of his trail, and the red fiends out there on the baking plain knew they had only to wait a while and then ride forward unmolested and strip off his scalp. Yet, being far from their reservation, the savages were impatient at

the delay. Their hearts were vengeful within them, for in the chase he had slain two of their number.

One of them, an impetuous young buck, was for making haste in finishing the paleface. He motioned toward the declining sun and suggested that the wounded man might try to crawl away with the coming of darkness. Besides, they had far to go, and it was a waste of time to wait for the paleface to die. Likely he was so far gone that he could not shoot to defend himself, and there would be little trouble in getting near enough to dispatch him.

The impetuous spirit of this savage prevailed, and soon the redskins began riding around and around man and horse and dog, spreading out into a circle with great gaps and slowly closing in, now and then uttering a challenging yell. As they closed in they flung themselves over upon the sides of their ponies opposite the wounded man, so that their horses seemed riderless. Occasionally a shot was fired from beneath the neck of a racing pony.

The dying man gathered himself a little and watched them. A puff of white smoke leaped out before a pony and was quickly left behind to dissolve and fade in the heated air. A bullet threw up a bit of dust within three feet of the white man. The dog bristled and growled. Another bullet clipped a stalk from a cactus plant five feet away.

"They're within shooting distance," whispered the doomed wretch. "Wonder if I've got nerve enough to drop a pony."

He rested his rifle on the body of the dead horse and waited. Out on the plain the racing ponies began to swim in a haze. He could see them indistinctly, and he brushed a hand across his eyes.

"I'm going fast, Boxer," he muttered to the dog. "My sight is failing! I'm burning inside! And I know you're choking yourself, poor dog! It's a hard way to pipe out."

The dog whined sympathetically and pressed closer. A bullet whistled past the head of the man.

He tightened his grip on his rifle, sought to take aim at the bluff of ponies and finally fired.

His bullet went wide of the target he sought, and a yell of derision floated to his ears through the hot air.

"No use!" he muttered, huskily. "I'm done for! It's the finish! They can close right in and wipe me out!"

The savages seemed to know it, and they were drawing nearer.

Of a sudden out from the depths of a long barranca, a mighty fissure in the plain, produced in former ages by a convulsion of nature, or marking the course of a river—out from one end that rose to the surface of the plain not far from the circling savages, came a horse and rider. As the rider rose into view he began shooting with a magazine rifle, and his first bullet caused a redskin to lose his hold and tumble end over end in the dirt, while the pony galloped on.

The following Indian stooped and seemed to catch up his wounded comrade as he swept past.

The lone horseman rode straight at them in a reckless manner, working his repeater.

A pony was wounded, another plunged forward into the dirt. In another moment the redskins wheeled and were in full flight, astounded and demoralized by the attack, two of the horses carrying double, while another left drops of blood upon the ground.

The daring paleface uttered a strange warwhoop of triumph:

"Breka Co-ax, Co-ax, Yale!"

Never before had those Indians heard such a singular cry from the lips of a white man. It seemed to fill them with a mad desire to get away, to flee at top speed. It struck terror into their hearts, as many a time the same slogan has struck fear to the hearts of those battling against Old Eli on some athletic field. They urged their ponies forward, and away they went, scurrying into the distance, with bullets singing around them.

The man behind the dead horse lifted himself and strained his bedimmed eyes, seeing the youthful rider shoot past in pursuit of the savages. The dog rose, planting his forefeet on the horse's body, and barked madly.

When he was satisfied that the Indians were in full retreat, with little thought of turning or offering resistance, the young man who had dashed out of the barranca drew up and turned about, galloping back toward those he had dared so much to save.

But he had come too late.

CHAPTER II.

THE DYING MINER.

As the rescuer rode near the dying man had fallen back beside his dead horse. Over him stood the dog, covered with dust, its eyes glaring redly, its teeth disclosed behind its cracked lips, ready to defend the body of its master. As the young horseman drew up the dog snarled fiercely.

The young man saw at a glance that the situation of the dog's master was serious in the extreme. He dismounted and stepped forward, leaving his horse, knowing well the animal would stand. As he approached the dog grew fiercer of aspect, and he saw the creature meant to leap straight at his throat.

"Good dog!" he said, stopping. "Fine dog! Come, sir—come! Ah-ha, fine fellow!"

But all his attempts to win the confidence of the dog were failures.

"The man is dying," he muttered. "Perhaps I might save him if I could get to him now. Must I shoot that dog? I hate to do it, for the creature seems very intelligent."

At this moment the man stirred a little and seemed to realize what was happening. He lifted his head a little and saw the dismounted horseman and the threatening dog.

"Down, Boxer; down, sir!" he commanded. "Be quiet!"

His voice rose scarcely above a whisper, but the dog reluctantly obeyed, still keeping his eyes on the young man, who now stepped up at once.

"You're badly wounded, sir," said he who had driven the savages away. "Let me see if I can do anything for you."

"Give me water—for the love of Heaven, water!" was the harshly whispered imploration.

In a twinkling the youth sprang to his horse and brought back a canteen that was well filled. This he held to the lips of the wretched man, while the crouching dog watched every move with his red eyes.

That water, warm though it was, brought back a little life to the sinking man.

"God bless you!" he murmured, gratefully.

The dog whined.

"Can't you give Boxer a little?" asked the dog's master. "He's suffering as much as I am."

The youth quickly removed from his saddle bags a deep tin plate, on which some of the water was poured,

and this the dog greedily licked up, wagging his tail in thankfulness.

"Poor old Boxer!" sighed the doomed man.

"Now, sir," said the youth, "let me examine your wound and find out what I can do for you."

"No use," was the declaration. "I'm done for. It's through the lung, and I've bled enough to finish two men. The blood is all out of me."

But the young man insisted on looking and did what he could to check the flow of blood. He did not wash the wound, as that would remove the clot and start fresh bleeding.

The doomed man shook his head a little.

"No use," he repeated. "I'm going now—I feel it. But you have done all you could for Old Bens, and you won't lose nothing by it. What's your name?"

"Frank Merriwell."

"Well, Pard Merriwell, you sure went for those red devils right hot. I allowed at first that you must have four or five friends with ye."

"I'm alone."

"And it was great grit for you to charge the red skunks that way. However did you happen to do it?"

"I saw what was going on from the high land to the west with the aid of a powerful glass. I knew they had a white man trapped here. I struck the barranca and managed to get down into it, so I was able to ride close without being seen and charge up from this end, where it rises to the level of the plain. That is all."

"It was nerve, young man, and plenty of it! My name is Benson Clark. I'm a miner. Been over in the Mazatzals. Struck it rich, young pard—struck it rich. There was no one but me and old Boxer, my dog. I took out a heap of dust, and I opine I located a quartz claim that certainly is worth a hundred thousand dollars, or I'm away off. Been a miner all my life. Grub staked it from the Canadian line to Mexico. Have managed to live, but this is my first strike. No one staked me this time, so it's all mine. But see, pard, what black luck and those red devils have done for me! I'm finished, and I'll never live to enjoy a dollar of my wealth. Pretty tough, eh?"

"Pretty tough," admitted Frank Merriwell; "but brace up. Who can tell——"

"I can. Bens Clark is at the end of his trail. Young man, I want you to see me properly planted. You'll find enough in the saddle bags here and in the belt around my waist to pay you for your trouble."

"I want no pay, sir."

"Well, I reckon you may as well have it, as I have neither kith nor kin in the wide world, and most of my friends have cashed in ahead of me, so I'm left all alone—me and Boxer."

The dying man lifted his hand with a great effort and caressed the dog. The animal whined and snuggled nearer, fixing his eyes on his master's face with an expression of devotion and anxiety that was quite touching to see.

"Good old Boxer!" sighed the man, with deep feeling. "You'll miss me, boy, and you're the only one in all the wide world. What will become of you, Boxer?"

Again the dog whined a little, touching the bloodless cheek of the man with its tongue.

"I'll do what I can for your dog, sir," said Frank Merriwell.

"What do you mean? Will you take Boxer and care for him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do it! You'll never be sorry. You'll find him the most faithful, devoted and intelligent of dumb animals. Truly, he knows almost as much as a man—more than lots of men. It's a shame he can't talk! He knows what I say to him almost always. I've almost fancied he might be taught to talk; but that's ridiculous, I know. Take him, Frank Merriwell, treat him well, and you'll never regret it."

The dog seemed listening. He looked from one to the other in a peculiar manner, and then, as if realizing what had passed and that he was soon to part with his master forever, he uttered a whining howl that was doleful and pathetic.

"Poor old Boxer—good boy!" said Benson Clark. "I've got to go, boy."

The dog crept close, and the dying man weakly folded the animal in his arms.

Frank Merriwell turned away. The sunlight was so bright and strong on the plain that it seemed to cause him to brush a hand over his eyes. He stood looking far off for some moments, but was given a start by hearing a weak call from the man.

"I'm going!" breathed Clark, huskily. "Here—in my pocket here you will find a rude chart that may lead you to my rich mines in the Mazatzals. Feel in my pocket for the leather case. That's it. Take it—keep it. It's yours. The mines are yours—if you can find them. Boxer is yours. Be good to him. Poor old Boxer!"

He closed his eyes and lay so still that Frank fancied the end had come. But it was not yet. After a little he slowly opened his eyes and looked at Merry. Immediately Frank knelt beside him, with uncovered head.

The dying man then looked at the dog.

"Boxer," he said, faintly, "I'm going off on my long trail, and we'll never meet up again this side of the happy hunting grounds. Good-by, old dog! This is your new master. Stick to him like glue, old boy. Fight for him—die for him, if you have to. I opine you understand what I mean."

A strange sound came from the throat of the dog—a sound that was almost like a human sob. If ever a dog sobbed that one did. Agony and sorrow was depicted in his attitude and the look in its red eyes.

The miner took the dog's paw and placed it in Frank Merriwell's hand, his body lying between them.

"I make you pards," said Benson Clark.

Then he whispered to Frank:

"Can't you pray? I've clean forgot all the prayers I ever knew. But I feel that I need a prayer said for me now, for I'm going up before the judgment bar. Pray, partner—pray to the Great Judge that he will be easy with me."

So Frank Merriwell prayed, and that prayer fell upon the heart of the dying man with such soothing balm that all fear and dread left him, and he passed into the great unknown with a peaceful smile on his weather-worn face.

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGE FUNERAL.

Frank found the saddle bags and the belt about the dead man's waist heavy with gold. It took him some time to make preparations for transporting the precious stuff, and it was no easy task for him to quiet his horse and induce the animal to stand while he lifted the corpse and placed it where it could be tied securely on the horse's back.

He had no thought of leaving the body of Benson Clark to be devoured by wolves and vultures.

The sun was resting close down to the blue tops of the western mountains when everything was ready to start.

The dog had watched every move with eyes full of singular intelligence, but made no move or sound until Merry was ready to go.

Then Frank turned more water from the canteen, after taking a few swallows himself, placing it before Boxer in the tin plate. The dog licked it up.

"Good Boxer!" said Merry, patting the beast's head. "I'm your master now, my boy. Your other master is dead. He has told you to stick to me. Did you understand?"

The dog made some strange swallowing and mumbling sounds in its throat, as if trying to talk back in words.

"By Jove!" said Merry, gazing at the creature with great interest. "You are a knowing fellow, and you actually try to talk. Your master fancied you might be taught to talk."

Again those strange swallowings and mumblings issued from the dog's throat, and the creature wagged its tail a little.

"We'll go now," said Frank. "It's a good distance to the Queen Mystery, and we have something to do before we can set out in earnest for the mine."

So they started off, Frank leading the horse bearing the ghastly burden, while the dog walked behind with hanging head, the perfect picture of sorrow.

A strange funeral procession it was, making its way toward the setting sun and the hazy mountains. The dead horse was left behind, while far in the sky wheeled two black specks, buzzards waiting for the feast.

The Indians had long vanished on the face of the plain, yet Frank knew their nature, and he was not at all sure he had seen the last of them.

The sun vanished behind the mountains and the blue night lay soft and soothing on the hot plain when the funeral procession came into the foothills.

It was not Frank's intention to carry the dead man farther than was needful, and, therefore, he kept his eyes about him for some place to bestow the body where it might rest safe from prowling beasts.

This place he found at last, and, with the aid of a flat stone, and with his bare hands, he scooped a shallow grave. Into this the body was fitted. Over the man's face Frank spread his own handkerchief. Then he besprinkled the dry earth lightly over the body at first, afterward using the flat rock to scrape and shovel more upon it, ending with covering it heavily with such stones as he could find, knowing well with what skill the ravening beasts of the desert could use their claw-armed paws.

For a time the dog sat and watched everything.

When his late master was placed in the grave he whined and cried softly; but when the body was covered he lay down beside the grave in silence, and there was in his posture something so heartbroken that Frank was moved to a great pity.

"Poor old Boxer!" he murmured. "It is the end to which all living things must come, each in its own time. But it is the law of nature, and it is not so bad, after all. Blessed is he who goes to his last deep sleep without fear, feeling that he has done his best and is willing to trust everything in the hands of Him who sees and knows all. The fear of death and what may follow is such as should trouble alone the coward or the wicked wretch. Boxer, your master seemed to pass without fear, and something tells me it is not so bad with him. His case is in the hands of the Great Judge, and we may rest sure that he will be done no wrong."

Was there ever such a strange funeral oration! A youth with bared head and solemn face, speaking above a grave, and a silent, grief-stricken dog as the only mourner and attendant! The still Arizona night all around, with no sound of humming insect, no stir of foliage, no whisper of moving breeze, the dome of heaven above, studded with millions of clear stars! The dog did not move or lift its head, but Frank saw the starshine glint upon his eyes, which were wide open and fastened upon the speaker.

When the work was completed Frank knelt for a moment beside that grave, praying softly, yet with an earnestness that bespoke his faith that his words were heard.

It was over. His horse was at a little distance. He went and brought the animal up and adjusted the saddle. The dead man's belt he had, stuffed to bursting and wondrous heavy, fastened about his own waist.

"Come, Boxer," he said, again stooping to pat the head of the dog. "We must go. Bid farewell to your master's grave. It's not likely you may ever again come beside it."

The dog stirred. He sat up and lifted his muzzle toward the stars. From his throat came a low note that rose and swelled to the most doleful sound imaginable.

With his blood chill in his body, Frank listened while the dog sang a requiem above that grave. Tears started from Merry's eyes, and never while life was his could he forget that sound and that sight. Never chanted words of mass had more of sorrow! No human tongue could speak greater grief.

At last the sound died away into silence, and the dog stood on all fours, with hanging head and tail, his muzzle kissing some of the rough stones heaped on that grave. How long he might have remained in that attitude cannot be said; but soon Frank spoke again and called him to follow. At the word he turned, and his manner denoted he was ready.

Merry swung into the saddle and started, looking over his shoulder. In dead silence, the dog followed. And so they passed into the still night.

CHAPTER IV.

NEW ARRIVALS IN HOLBROOK.

The town of Holbrook, Arizona, had been greatly stirred. It had not yet settled into its accustomed grooves. The proprietor of the best hotel in town had received a consignment of fine furniture, carpets, draperies, wall-paper and pictures, and he had set about renovating and decorating several of the largest rooms in his house, having for that purpose a number of workmen imported from some Eastern point. It was said that the rooms had been rearranged to connect with each other in a suite, and that when they were completed, and furnished, and decorated they were dazlingly magnificent, nothing like them ever before having been seen in the place. The good citizens of Holbrook wondered and were amazed at all this; but they did not know that not one dollar had been expended by the proprietor of the hotel. All this work had been done without expense of his to accommodate some guests who came in due time and took possession of those rooms.

The California Special had dropped four persons in Holbrook, who regretfully left the comfort of a palace car and looked about them with some show of dismay on the cluttered streets and crude buildings of the Southwestern town. Holbrook was even better in general appearance than many Western towns, but, contrasted with clean, orderly, handsome Eastern villages, it was offensive to the eyes of the proud lady who was aided from the steps of the car and descended to the station platform with the air of a queen. She turned up her aristocratic nose a little on glancing around.

This woman was dressed in the height of fashion, although somewhat too heavily for the country she now found herself in; but there was about her an air of display that betokened a lack of correct taste, which is ever pronounced in those who seek to attract atten-

tion and produce astonishment and awe. She had gray hair and a cold, unattractive face. Still there was about her face something that plainly denoted she had been in her girlhood very attractive.

She was followed by a girl who was so pretty and so modest in appearance that the rough men who beheld her gasped with astonishment. Never in the history of the town had such a pretty girl placed her foot within its limits. She had a graceful figure, fine complexion, Cupid-bow mouth, flushed cheeks, large brown eyes and hair in which there was a hint of red-gold, in spite of its darkness.

A colored maid followed them.

From another car descended a thin, wiry, nervous man, who had a great blue beak of a nose, and who hastened to join the trio, speaking to them.

The hotel proprietor had at the station the finest carriage he could find, and this whisked them away to the hotel as soon as they had entered it, leaving the loungers about the station wondering, while the train went diminishing into the distance, flinging its trail of black smoke against the blue of the Arizona sky.

At the hotel the lady and her daughter occupied two of the finest rooms, the colored maid another, less expensively furnished, and the man with the blue nose was given the fourth.

Holbrook wondered what it meant.

The lady ordered a meal to be served in her rooms.

The report went forth at once, and again Holbrook stood agog.

The hotel register was watched. Finally the man with the restless eyes and blue beak entered the office and wrote nervously in the register.

Barely was he gone when a dozen persons were packed about the desk, seeking to look over one another's shoulders to see what had been written.

"Whatever is it, Hank?" asked one. "You sure kin read writin'. Whatever do you make o' it?"

"Mrs. D. Roscoe Arlington, the fust name," said the one called Hank. "Then comes 'Miss Arlington,' arter which is 'Mr. Eliot Dodge,' an' lastly I sees 'Hannah Jackson.'"

"Which last must be the nigger woman," said one of the rough men.

"I allows so," nodded Hank. "An' it 'pears to me that name o' Arlington is some familiar. I somehow thinks I has heard it."

"Why, to be course you has!" said another of the men. "D. Roscoe Arlington, did you say? Who

hasn't heerd that name? He's one o' them big guns what has so much money he can't count it to save his gizzard. Ev'rybody has heerd o' D. Roscoe Arlington. If he keeps on gittin' rich the way he has the past three years or so, old Morgan won't be in the game. Why, this Arlington may now be the richest man in this country, if ev'rything were rightly known about him. He owns railroads, an' mines, an' ships, an' manufacturin' plants, an' nobody knows what all."

"That sartin explains a whole lot the fixin' up that has been a-doin' around this ranch," said a little man with a thirsty-looking mouth. "They was a-preparin' fer the wife o' this mighty rich gent."

"But say!" exclaimed a young fellow with a wicked face, "ain't she got a slick-lookin' gal with her, what?"

Some of them laughed and slapped him on the back.

"Go on, Petel!" cried one chap. "You're a gay one with Greaser gals, but you won't be able to make a wide trail with that yar young lady, so don't be lookin' that way."

"Wonder whatever could 'a' brought such people here," speculated a man with tobacco juice on his chin. "They must mean to stay a while, else they'd never had them rooms fixed up the way they are."

A ruffianly-looking man with a full beard broke into a low laugh.

"Why, ain't none o' you heard about the fight what's bein' made to git holt o' a certain mine not so very fur from yere?" he asked. "I mean the mine owned by a young chap what calls hisself Frank Merriwell. You oughter know somethin' about that."

"Why, 'pears to me," observed the fellow with tobacco juice on his chin—" 'pears to me I did hear that thar was trouble over a mine somewhar down in the Mogollons an' that Cimarron Bill had been sent to take it."

"He was sent," said the full-bearded man.

"Then I 'lows he took it, fer Bill's sure to do any job he tackles."

"He ain't took it none. Frank Merriwell is still a-holdin' the mine, an' Bill has had his troubles, leavin' a good part o' his backers stiff arter the ruction."

"Say you so? Wal, this Merriwell sure must be a hot fighter. But Bill will down him in the end, an' you kin bet your last simoleon on that."

To which the man with the full beard said nothing.

"All this don't explain any to me jest why this lady an' her party is hyer," said the one with the thirsty mouth.

"It ain't noways likely she's lookin' arter Cimarron Bill none," said another.

"Whoever is a-takin' my name in vain?" demanded a voice that made them all start and turn toward the door, where they beheld a slender, supple man, with a terrible face and the most deadly eyes ever looked into.

"It's Cimarron Bill hisself!" gasped one, in a whisper.

And the entire crowd seemed awe-stricken and afraid.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. ARLINGTON HAS A VISITOR.

The black maid stood over the little table at which mother and daughter sat taking tea.

"Sugar, Jackson," said the lady, wearily.

The maid lifted the sugar bowl, but, finding no tongs, was compelled to use a spoon.

"Why don't you use the tongs, Jackson?" asked the woman.

"Dar am no tongs, ma'am," answered the maid.

"No tongs? no tongs?" exclaimed Mrs. Arlington, in astonished surprise. "And I directed that everything should be prepared here—that we should have every convenience of a first-class hotel. Dear me! Why, I've found nothing right! The hardship of spending some days in such a place will prostrate me. I know it will!"

"But why have you come here, mother?" asked June Arlington, in a voice that denoted culture and a refined nature. "I cannot understand it. You told me in the first place that you were going to Mexico. Then I heard you urging father to come here. When he said it was not possible, you seemed to get ahgry, and you declared that you would come here yourself. But why should you come because he could not? That I wonder at."

"He would not!" exclaimed Mrs. Arlington, sipping her tea. "It was his duty. Never mind the particulars, June; you may know some time, but not now."

"And I did not wish to come here, mother. You knew that."

"My daughter, I have decided that it is necessary to keep you with me. I determined on that after your surprising behavior the last time you went to Fardale. You deceived me, June! I cannot forget that."

The words were spoken with cold severity.

June flushed a little.

"It was for Chester's good, as I explained to you," she said, somewhat warmly. "He has never thanked me for it, yet it is I who have kept him in Fardale Academy. Had I not entreated Dick Merriwell to be easy with him, Chester must have been compelled to leave or be expelled before this."

"I cannot believe that, June. But, were it true, it is no excuse for your action. I want no favors from either of the Merriwells. I will accept nothing from them! Dick Merriwell is my boy's enemy, and he shall know what it is to have an Arlington for a foe. I have determined on that. I repeat that I'll accept nothing from him."

"Once——" June stopped short. She had been on the verge of telling her mother that once that lady had accepted something from Dick Merriwell—her life! For, as Mrs. Arlington slipped on the icy platform of the railway station at Fardale and was falling beneath the wheels of a moving train, Dick had grasped and held her till the cars passed and she was safe.

But June had seen her mother turn blue with anger at mention of this affair, so she checked herself now, not wishing to arouse the lady.

Tea was finished in silence, mother and daughter being occupied with their thoughts.

The maid moved softly about the table.

They had just finished when there came a tap on the door.

"See who it is, Jackson," directed Mrs. Arlington.

The man with the blue beak was at the door.

"I must speak with Mrs. Arlington," he said, and entered, hat in hand.

"What is it, Mr. Dodge?" asked the lady, frowning coldly and plainly annoyed.

Eliot Dodge paused and looked at June significantly.

"Oh, is it a private matter?" asked the lady.

Flushing a bit, June arose at once and withdrew from the room.

"William Lamson has arrived in town and demands to see you," said Dodge, when June had disappeared, the maid having likewise withdrawn.

"That man?" said Mrs. Arlington, with a little start and a slight shiver. "I have brought you to do the business with him. You are a regular attorney of the C. M. A. of A., and you have my instructions."

"So I told him."

"Well?"

"He refused point blank to do any business whatever with me."

"He did."

"Yes. I talked to him pretty straight until—ahem!—until I could say no more."

"You could say no more?"

"No, madam; it was impossible."

"Why impossible?"

"He had drawn and cocked a revolver and pointed it at me. He told me to shut up and take word from him to you at once or he would shoot me."

"What a dreadful creature!"

"He is, indeed, madam; he's a typical ruffian of the worst sort."

"And, therefore, the very man to accomplish the work," said she, with growing interest. "But I dislike very much to have dealings with such a fellow."

"I thoroughly understand that, madam."

"You might attend to the matter fully as well."

"That is true, Mrs. Arlington."

"You told him so?"

"I did."

"And still——"

"And still he drew a gun on me. He is bound to see you. He says he will, and I am sure he is a man to make his word good. Really I don't know how you are going to get out of it."

"Then I shall not try," said the lady, composing herself.

"You mean——"

"I'll see him."

"Here?"

"Yes."

"Now?"

"Send him up at once. I may as well have it over."

Eliot Dodge hesitated.

"I shall be in my room," he said. "If you need me——"

"I understand. Go bring this man to my door."

Dodge departed, and Mrs. Arlington waited. When there came a knock on the door she coldly said:

"Come in."

Cimarron Bill entered the room!

CHAPTER VI.

CIMARRON BILL MAKES A BARGAIN.

Mrs. Arlington had not called her servant to let this man in. She glanced toward the door of the room into which her daughter had retired, and the look on her face was one of apprehension. Cimarron Bill was

a wicked man, as his every aspect betokened, and this woman could not think without shame that June should have any knowledge of her dealings with such a creature.

So she arose hastily, which was quite unlike her, and crossed the floor to close the door, a strange thing, considering that she seldom did a thing that another could do for her.

When June was thus shut out, the woman recrossed the floor to likewise close the door of the room into which the colored maid had retired.

All the while Cimarron Bill, hat in hand, stood watching her closely with his evil eyes. For him it must have been a most exceeding strange thing to come thus into the presence of a woman whose husband was known far and wide as a money king, a woman whose every wish that wealth could serve was sure to be granted almost as quickly as expressed.

When she had closed the doors she turned about and faced him, surveying him from head to feet with her cold and penetrating eyes. He looked back at her with a sort of boldness, for this man was not one to be in the least downcast in the presence of a human being of whatever degree.

Mrs. Arlington motioned toward a chair.

"Will you sit down, sir?" she invited.

"Thank you, madam," said Bill, casting aside the rough manner of speech that he sometimes assumed and now using very decent English. "I don't care if I do."

Whereupon he placed his hat upon the table and sat upon a chair, with a certain pantherish undulation of his body, as if his muscles flowed beneath his skin.

"Mr. Dodge saw you," said the woman, remaining standing. "I directed him to inform you that he was my accredited agent and prepared to transact any business with you. I thought it better for him to attend to this affair."

"And I, madam, if you will excuse me, thought it best that we should come face to face and have our dealings thus. That is why I declined to do any business whatever with the gent with the blue nose."

"I did not suppose it would be necessary for me to go so far into this matter until I was informed of your failure to take possession of the property that rightfully belongs to the Consolidated Mining Association of America. I must say, sir, that I am very much displeased over your failure."

"And you can be no more so than am I myself,"

returned Bill, civilly enough, yet with a sort of boldness that did not please her, as she was accustomed to much deference and respect. "But you must know it is difficult, even in this country, to find men who are eager to put on themselves the brand of outlaws, and I acknowledge that my force was not sufficient. The young dog is a stiff fighter, and that I had not counted on, him being a tenderfoot to a certain degree—though," he added, as if on second thought, "he's not so very tender, after all."

And this, had Frank Merriwell known it, was a great compliment to fall from the lips of this desperado, who was known all over the Southwest as a man who hesitated at no crime to accomplish his ends, and regarded no man living as his equal with steel or shooting-iron.

"You were told to collect an army, if necessary. Mr. Dodge informs me that you were directed to get together a force sufficient to make failure out of the question. Yet you were repulsed and beaten off when you went to seize the mine."

"Twice," said Bill, grimly. "And the second time a full half of my men were dropped cold or hurt so bad that they were put out of the fight. It was not just my fault that I failed then, for the treachery of a Mexican girl betrayed my plans to Merriwell, so he was ready with a trap when I expected to take him by surprise. That is how it came about, madam. I had his foreman bribed and should have walked into possession of the mine with little or no trouble but for the girl I mention. It was a bad piece of business."

"Bad!" she exclaimed, nodding a little. "It was very unfortunate!"

"A word that scarce expresses it, madam. The rest of my men, the curs, with one or two exceptions, weakened and gave it up as a bad job. And then, on top of that, I was informed that the syndicate had grown disinclined to press the matter further in such a manner, fearing to get itself into serious trouble."

"That's it!" said the woman, sharply. "But I have taken hold of this matter. The syndicate seems willing to obtain the mine by some other and slower method. I am not. I cannot brook delay! I have a reason why I wish the taking of the mine with the smallest possible delay, and it makes no difference to me how the work is accomplished. That is why I am here on the scene of action. I shall remain here until I triumph! If you are able to accomplish the work,

well and good. If you are not, then another man must be found for it."

Cimarron Bill smiled in a most evil manner.

"Madam," he said, "I think you will have trouble to find in all this country another man so well prepared to accomplish the task."

"Yet you confess that you have failed twice."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"For which reason," he averred, "I am all the more dangerous. There is an old saying that the third time never fails. I am ready for the third trial."

"I am glad to hear you speak this way. What will you do?"

"Gather a stronger force and lay my plans so there can be no failure."

"It is well."

"But that will take much money, madam. You have it at your command. It is almost certain that all of us, to the last man, will bear the brand of outlaws. We may be hunted. It may be necessary for me to hasten into Mexico and lose myself there for a time. I must have money in abundance for myself. As for the men who take part with me, they will all demand high prices. When it is over and the mine is delivered into the possession of the syndicate, I shall not trouble about any one save myself. The men who are with me may look out for themselves."

This was said in a most cold-blooded manner, speaking plainly the real character of the wretch.

"I care nothing about that," said the woman. "Fix that matter as you choose. How much money will you require?"

"Let me see," said Bill, as if meditating. "It will take, I am sure, at least fifty men. They may be got at various prices, some more, some less; but there will be the bringing of them together and other expenses. I should say that they must cost at least two hundred dollars each, which makes a pretty little sum of ten thousand dollars."

"Then it will cost ten thousand dollars?" said Mrs. Arlington, quickly. "I'll draw the sum from my own private account."

"Wait a bit, madam," said the chief of desperadoes. "I have reckoned for the men, but that does not include myself. I have said that I must be well paid. I value myself quite as much as fifty common men, and that is another ten thousand, or twenty thousand dollars in all, for which sum I am ready to undertake

the job. I'll add, also, that I guarantee it shall not fail this time."

It seemed that such a sum must have staggered the woman. Indeed, her face went a trifle pale, but her lips were pressed together, and she coldly said:

"It is a bargain! You shall have the money, but not until you have accomplished the work. Understand that, not until the work is done!"

CHAPTER VII.

SEEN FROM THE WINDOW.

Never before had there been such a bargain between such a man and such a woman. It was the strangest compact on record. And no wonder Mrs. Arlington had closed the doors that her daughter and her maid should not hear! Had June known all she must have turned with loathing and horror from the woman.

Had D. Roscoe Arlington known he must have been shocked and heart-torn beyond measure. Had he known he must have wondered if this woman had matured from the sweet country girl who once declared with blushes and hanging head that love in a cottage with him was all the happiness she asked. Had he known he might have remembered the soft moonlight night in June when beneath the fragrant lilacs they plighted their troth, and surely his gold-hardened heart would have melted with anguish over the frightful change.

In truth, Mrs. Arlington had become deranged, as it were, on one point. Her son was her idol. She had petted, and flattered, and spoiled him. She had sent him off to school at Fardale with the conviction that he was certain to rise superior to all other boys there. And from him she had come to learn that he had not risen, but had been imposed upon, defeated, baffled and held down by another lad who was the recognized leader in the school. Into the ears of his astonished and angry mother Chester Arlington had poured his tale of woe, and it had filled her soul with intense hatred for this other boy by the name of Merriwell who had dared think himself better than her Chester. She had gone to Fardale to set things about as they should be, and had failed. That seemed to fill her with such bitterness that she was quite robbed of sober judgment and reason.

When Mrs. Arlington learned that the mining syndicate had claims to the mines belonging to Frank and Dick Merriwell, she was aroused. When she came to

understand that the taking of those mines by the syndicate would leave the Merriwell brothers almost penniless and would be the signal for Dick Merriwell to leave Fardale, she determined that the thing should be brought about at any cost of money, or time, or trouble to herself.

And it was in pursuit of this determination that the wife of D. Roscoe Arlington had come to Arizona and placed herself face to face with a ruffian like Cimarron Bill, with whom she now struck a bargain that was most astounding.

Was the woman in her right mind?

It made little difference to Bill if she were sane or not, as long as he obtained possession of that money. But when he asked for it in advance she smiled upon him coldly, almost scornfully.

"You were paid money by the syndicate, and you pledged them to accomplish a task at which you failed. This time there will be no money forthcoming until the work is done."

In return the man smiled back at her, and he said:

"That settles it! I'm not a fool. When the work is done I may find myself on the run for Mexico, with the law reaching for me. In such a case, I'll have no time to collect. Cash in advance is my motto. You'll bargain with me, or you'll fail, in everything. You cannot get another man to fill my boots in the whole country. And if you were to throw me down and give the job over into the hands of another gent, I'd speak one word to him that would be enough."

"What do you mean?" she asked, wondering and angry. "What word?"

"The word 'stop,'" said Bill. "When Cimarron Bill says 'stop,' you can bet they stop. They know what it means if they don't. If you don't think so, count the notches on my guns."

"You mean that you would turn against me?"

"Not exactly, madam; I mean that I have no idea of letting any other gent get my job. I do this piece of work—or no one does it. I rather admire the sand of this Merriwell, though I'd slit his throat just the same for the price. If there was no object in being against him, I'd surely be for him; and it seems that you ought to know better than to put Cimarron Bill in the ranks of the enemy."

"It's a threat!" cried the woman.

"Not so; it's a business statement, begging your pardon, madam. I don't propose that any gent shall jump my claim."

"How can I be sure you'll not play me false? How can I know you'll not take the money and do nothing?"

"The syndicate paid me in advance, as you know. I did my best to earn the money. It was not my fault that I failed. In this case, if you pay the sum I have named, I swear to you I'll know no rest until I have succeeded. If I cannot succeed in one way, I will in another."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I'll capture or kill Frank Merriwell himself."

"If you could do that!" said the woman, with great eagerness. "He is the great stumbling block."

"That's right. With him out of the way, taking the mine would be easy."

"Is there no way this can be done before you try to seize the mine?"

"He keeps pretty close to it. If he could be caught by himself. I have had my hands upon him twice, and he has slipped me both times. Next time he will not!"

"Next time——"

"An accident will happen to him," assured Bill, with deadly meaning. "That will be the simplest method."

"You are right!" she said, in a whisper. "If that could happen——"

"Would you pay the money?"

"I would. Understand, I make no bargain with you for such a thing, but that mine must be torn from him somehow. I have with me some money."

Cimarron Bill understood her well, and he nodded.

"Madam," he said, "give me a little time and I'll find a way to see to it."

At this moment there was a commotion in the street, the sound of fighting dogs, shouts of men, and the clatter of horses' hoofs.

Bill rose quickly and strode to the window, looking down into the street. A handsome Irish setter had been attacked by two mongrel dogs, and he was giving those dogs the surprise of their lives. He had one by the neck in a moment, and the mongrel was shaken like a rat. When the setter let go the mongrel took to his heels, howling with pain and terror. Then the setter turned on the other dog and a battle that was fierce enough for a few moments ensued, which ended again in the complete triumph of the setter.

Two young men had ridden into town behind the setter, and they had drawn up to witness the result of the fight. A crowd had quickly gathered, and the triumphant setter was loudly applauded.

At sight of one of the two horsemen Cimarron Bill burst forth with an exclamation of excitement.

"Look!" he said, pointing from the open window. "See—see that fellow on the dark horse!"

Mrs. Arlington was near the window.

"The one with the small mustache?" she asked.

"Yes, that's the one."

"I see him."

"Well, that's Frank Merriwell!" said Bill.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GIRL WHO SAVED FRANK.

Cimarron Bill was right. Frank Merriwell and Bart Hodge had ridden into Holbrook, and with them had come Boxer, the dog. Boxer had been attacked by the mongrel curs, and he showed his mettle by quickly putting them to flight.

As Bill gazed down from that window the evil light in his eyes deepened.

"Remember our bargain!" he said, in such a terrible voice that the woman at his side shuddered.

Then she saw him bring forth a revolver, and, knowing what he meant to do, she uttered a little scream and ran back into another part of the room, unwilling to witness the dark deed.

Quickly kneeling, Bill rested his elbow on the window ledge and took aim, meaning to send a bullet through the heart of the rightful owner of the Queen Mystery mine.

The commotion in the street and her mother's cry had brought June Arlington into that room. June saw the man with the revolver, and her eyes fell on the horseman below. She recognized Frank Merriwell, for all that he was bronzed and changed, and had a small mustache.

With a sudden scream, the girl flung herself on Bill and spoiled his aim, so that when the revolver spouted smoke the bullet flew wide of the mark intended.

Bill uttered a savage snarl, wheeling about.

"You wretch!" panted the girl, who was now pale as snow. "You murderer!"

The man was dazzled by her beauty. Immediately he moved back from the window, bowing low.

"Beg your pardon, miss," he said. "He sure is an enemy of mine, and out here we shoots on sight. But mebbe he is your friend, in which case I lets up and gives him another show."

In that moment of excitement he had fallen into the

manner of speaking that is frequently heard on the frontier.

She looked at him with unspeakable horror in her eyes.

"What are you doing here?" she panted. "You—you—murderer! Mother—this man—why is he here?"

But Mrs. Arlington, usually cold as ice and perfectly self-possessed, had quite lost her nerve. She sank into a chair, seeming on the verge of fainting, while she gave Bill a look that, ruffian though he was, he understood as an appeal to be left alone with June.

Nor was he loath about getting out of that room. His pistol had been discharged from the window, and, though the bullet had found no human target, men might come in haste to ask unpleasant questions.

"I begs your pardon, madam," he said, hurriedly picking up his hat. "I thinks I'll call again and finish this yere bit o' business. Just now I has another matter to attend to."

Then he hastened out.

June had flown to her mother.

"Tell me—tell me, mother, what it means!" she implored.

"My smelling salts," faintly breathed the woman. "My heart, June! I—I'm afraid!"

Now June knew well that the one great fear of her mother's life was sudden death from a heart trouble that came upon her at times, and so the girl hastened to bring out the bottle of salts and hold it beneath the pale lady's nose till she was somewhat recovered, though still resting limp on her chair and breathing heavily.

"What does it mean, mother?" asked the girl again. "I do not understand these strange things. I do not understand why such a wicked-looking man should be here in this room and about to shoot down in cold blood a young man in the street. He would have shot him from this very window had not I spoiled his aim."

Mrs. Arlington turned her eyes toward her daughter's face, but looked away quickly, still trembling.

"Did you know him at whom the man was about to shoot?" she weakly asked.

"Yes, I knew him, or I am much mistaken. It was Frank Merriwell. I saw him at the hotel in Fardale the day I returned to him those papers. You recollect, mother."

"Yes, I remember it all too well, and it was the

giving back to him of those papers that has made no end of trouble for us all. But for that foolish act of yours, June, he would not still be holding the mines that are rightfully the property of the C. M. A. of A."

"If those mines do not belong to him, how is it that he can hold them?"

"He has possession, and he holds it with armed men."

"But the law——"

"The law is slow, and without those papers it is not very sure. It is your folly, girl," declared the woman, reproachfully, "that has made no end of trouble. It is your folly that brought Frank Merriwell near to his end a few moments ago, though you it was who saved him then."

"Mother, you speak in riddles! How can that be? I gave him back what was his. And have you forgotten that it was his brother, Dick, who kept you from slipping beneath the car wheels, where you must have been maimed or killed?"

At this Mrs. Arlington sat up, and something like anger took from her her great pallor.

"No," said she, "nor have I forgotten that it was Dick Merriwell who brought upon my son all his trouble at Fardale! Dick Merriwell has been his blight there! Dick Merriwell is his enemy. He has tried to set himself over my boy, and no one shall do that!"

June knew how useless it was to talk of this matter with her mother, who refused to listen to reason, and so she did not try to press it farther; but she again asked who was the man who had tried to shoot from the window.

"He was a miner," said Mrs. Arlington.

"And what business had he here in this room?"

"That is nothing to you, girl. Forget that you saw him here."

"A thing easier said than done, mother. I saw his face and his eyes, and I know he is a wicked man and one to be greatly feared. Why should you have dealings with such a wretch?"

"You ask too many needless questions, June. Look out and tell me if you still see anything of—of—Frank Merriwell."

But when June looked from the window Frank Merriwell was not to be seen on the street, which had again resumed its usual aspect.

"I must have a spell of quiet to restore my nerves, June," said Mrs. Arlington, when the girl had told

her. "Leave me. Call Jackson. I think I will lie down."

So the colored maid was called, and June lingered to make sure there was nothing she could do for her mother, who coldly bade her go.

In her own room June found herself filled with tempestuous thoughts and vain speculations. She was bewildered by it all, and there was much that she could not understand, for her mother had told her little or nothing of what had brought them to that Arizona town. She was wise enough to know full well that the lady had not come there in search of health, and surely it could not be pleasure she expected in such a place, which left but one thing to suppose—it was business. But what sort of business could she have there? and why should she meet and do business with a murderous wretch like the man who had tried to shoot Frank Merriwell from the open window?

Knowing there was little danger of interruption, June found pen, ink and paper and sat herself down to write a letter. She thought at first that she would make it very brief, and she found it exceeding hard to begin; but when she had begun it, it ran on and on until she had written many pages. Sometimes she laughed over it, and sometimes she blushed; once her chin quivered and tears seemed to fill her splendid eyes. When it was all finished she read it over, her cheeks glowing, and at the end she kissed the paper, at which the blush swept down to her very neck, and in great confusion she folded it all hastily and put it into an envelope, which she hurriedly sealed. Although she was not aware of it, she had spent nearly two hours over the letter. On the envelope she wrote a name and address, and then, finding her hat, she slipped out to mail it.

CHAPTER IX.

A SENSATION IN TOWN.

Frank's little "scout," as he called it, on which expedition he had driven the redskins from the wounded miner, had convinced him that Cimarron Bill and his gang had withdrawn from the vicinity of the Queen Mystery mine.

So it came about that Merry and Bart Hodge started for Holbrook, bringing with them the gold Frank had found in the saddle bags and belt of the dead miner.

Boxer would not be left behind. Since the death of his former master the dog kept close to Frank, for

whom he seemed to have formed an affection quite as deep as that he had entertained for Benson Clark.

Frank and Bart came dust covered and wearied into Holbrook.

Boxer's engagement with the mongrel curs, who set upon him, was an incident to enliven their advent in town, and it demonstrated the mettle of the setter.

The shot that came from the window of the hotel was somewhat surprising; but, as the bullet failed to pass anywhere near either Bart or Merry they did not fancy it was intended for them. Still Frank dropped a hand toward the pistol swinging at his hip, thinking the lead might be intended for Boxer.

A puff of smoke was dissolving before the open window, but Cimarron Bill had vanished, nor did he again appear there. Neither Frank nor Bart had seen him.

So they were not greatly alarmed, and they laughed over the manner in which Boxer had put his assailants to flight, merriment which was joined in by many of the spectators who had gathered to witness the fight.

"Good boy, Boxer!" said Merry. "You did that up slickly."

At which the setter turned toward Frank and showed his teeth in a grin, and something followed that caused several of the bystanders to gasp and stagger or stand dazed and astounded.

When Frank and Bart rode on two or three of those men hurried into Schlitzeneimer's saloon and jumped to the bar, where one of them banged the bar with his clinched fist, and shouted:

"By thunder! that's the first time I ever heard a dog talk! Was I dreaming?"

"None whatever, pard!" declared another, mopping sweat from his face. "I heard it plain enough. For the love of goodness, Fritz, give me a snifter of tanglefoot! I need something to brace my nerves after that!"

"Vot id vos you peen sayin'?" asked the fat Dutchman behind the bar. "Vot vos dot voolishness apoudt der talkings uf a tog?"

"No foolishness," declared the sweating individual, as whiskey and glasses were placed on the bar. "I'll swear to it. The dog that came in with those young gents an' whipped two other dogs in short order sartin made an observation in good clean United States, or I'm the biggest liar on two legs."

"Say, Benchy!" said the Dutchman, scornfully, "I pelief you vos readiness to haf anoder attack py dose delerium triangles, ain'd id! Uf you vill undertook

my advice, you vill off svear alretty soon und safe yourself from der snakes some droubles."

"This is my first drink to-day," asserted Benchy, as he poured with shaking hand; "and I'd not take this if I didn't need it a whole lot to steady my nerves arter hearin' a dog talk."

"It's on the level, Fritz," assured the man who had banged the bar with his fist. "I heard it myself. The young fellow with the mustache says to the dog arter the dog had licked t'other dogs, says he, 'Good boy, Boxer; you done that up slick.' Then the dog turns about and grins up at him and winks, and he opens his mouth, and I hope I may be struck dead where I stand this minute if he didn't answer and say, 'Oh, that was no trick at all, Frank; those low-bred curs haven't any sand.' I heard it, Fritz, and I'll swear to it with my last breath!"

"You vos craziness!" said the Dutchman. "Oh you vos drying some jokes on me to play alretty."

But now several of the others asserted that they also had heard the dog speak, and that the animal had uttered the very words quoted by the man called Spikes.

"Id peen a put up jobs!" shouted Schlitzeneimer, angrily. "Uf vor a greadt vool you tookit me, you vos not so much uf a jackass as I look to peen! Id vos nod bossible a tog vor to speech, und I vill bate zwi t'ousan' tollar it on!"

"But I heard him!" declared Benchy.

"I'm another!" averred Spikes.

"We all heard him!" cried the others at the bar.

"You got vrom my blace uf pusiness out britty queek!" ordered the Dutchman, in a great rage. "I vill not had so many plame liars aroundt! Und dond you back come some more alretty undil you vos readiness apology to make vor me drying to vool!"

"Look here, Fritz," said Benchy, leaning on the bar, "I'll bet you ten dollars coin of the realm that the dog can talk! If I had been alone in hearing the beast, I might have thought myself fooled; but all these other gents heard him, and so there is no mistake. Do you take me?"

"Den tollers haf nod seen you in a month," declared Schlitzeneimer, disdainfully. "Howeffer, uf you prings pack by you dot tog und he vill speech my saloon in, I vill gif you den tollars my own moneys out uf, and all der drink you can a whole veek vor. Now you tookit my advice und shut upness or make goot britty queek."

"I'll do it!" cried Benchy, and he hastened forth.

Frank and Bart had proceeded directly to the bank, where their dust was weighed and taken on deposit. This done, they left and sought a square meal in the very hotel where Mrs. Arlington and June were stopping. Fortunately the presence of his guests, who paid extravagantly well, had caused the proprietor to have on hand an unusual stock of cooked food, and he was able to see that the young men from the mines were provided for in a manner that surprised and pleased them not a little.

Although he took good care to keep out of sight, Cimarron Bill knew Frank Merriwell was in the hotel. At the bar of the place Bill found a rough, bewhiskered fellow whom he drew aside.

"Bob," said Bill, in a whisper, "are you ready to tackle a tough proposition?"

"For the needful, Bill," was the quiet answer of the man, who, in spite of his rough appearance, was known by his mild manner of speech as Gentle Bob. "What is it?"

"You know the young tenderfoot gent what I have been stacking up against—the one what I spoke to you about?"

"I reckon."

"Well, he is now eatin' in the dinin'-room."

"Sho!" said Bob, in placid surprise.

"Fact," assured Bill. "Him an' one of his pards is thar. They came inter town together a short time ago. Now I could pick a quarrel with them, and I allows I could shoot 'em both; but it would be knowed agin' me that I had been tryin' to jump their claim, which sartin' would rouse feelin's. In your case, as you were nohow consarned in the raid on the mine, it would be different, an' I lows you might find a way o' doin' the job easy an' slick. You kin plead self-defence, an' I promise you there will be plenty o' money to defend ye."

"It's the money fer the job I'm a-thinkin' of first, Bill," said Bob.

"A good clean thousan' dollars if you shoots the young gent with the mustache," whispered Bill.

"Do you mean it?" asked Bob, looking at him hard. "Where does it come from?"

"That I allow is none of your business. You has my word that you gets it. And I opine the word o' Cimarron Bill is knowed to be good."

"As his bond," said Gentle Bob, taking out a brace of pistols and looking them over. "I takes the job,

Bill; and there sartin will be a funeral in these parts to-morrer."

You are right, Gentle Bob, ruffian and cutthroat, tool of a worse ruffian! on the morrow there will be a funeral in Holbrook, and in that funeral you will be greatly concerned, yet without knowing anything of it whatever!

CHAPTER X.

BOXER CREATES A STIR.

When Frank and Bart came out of the hotel, with Boxer at their heels, they found a group of men on the steps engaged in earnest discussion. Immediately, on sight of the two young men and the dog, the babel of voices fell to a hush and the men all squared about and stared. But Merry immediately noticed that it was not at Bart or himself that they were staring, but at Boxer. The dog seemed to observe this, likewise, for he stopped short, with one paw uplifted, surveyed the men, and observed:

"Say, Frank, what do you suppose the ginnies are gawking at?"

"Mother av Moses!" cried an Irishman in the group. "Oi swear be all the saints the baste did spake!"

"Yah! yah!" chattered a pig-tailed Chinaman by the name of Sing Lee, who ran a laundry in town. "Dogee talkee allee samee likee Chinyman."

"Go on, you rat-eater!" contemptuously exclaimed the dog. "If I couldn't talk better than you I'd go drown myself!"

Needless to say this brought the excitement of the crowd to a high pitch.

Benchy and Spikes were on hand, and now the former appealed to Frank.

"Is that your dog?" he asked.

"Well, I lay claim to him," smiled Merry.

"He—he—can he talk?"

"Didn't you hear him?"

"Yes, but——"

"Well, what better evidence do you want than your own ears?"

"That's enough; but Schlitzenheimer called me names and said I was trying to put up a joke on him because I told him I heard the dog talk."

"Who's Schlitzenheimer?"

"He runs the saloon down the street right in front of which your dog whipped those other dogs what

jumped on him. He's a black-headed Dutchman. Come on down and show him the dog."

"Come on!" cried others.

Merry didn't mind the lark, but he now turned to the dog, with a very serious expression on his face, saying:

"How about it, Boxer? I believe you told me you hold an antipathy against Dutchmen. Will you go down to Schlitzenheimer's with me?"

The dog seemed to hesitate, and then he answered:

"Oh, I don't care; go ahead. I'm not stuck on Dutchmen, but I'll teach this one a lesson."

"All right," said Merry. "Come on."

Benchy triumphantly led the way, being followed by Frank and Bart and the dog, with the crowd at the heels of them. The Irishman was protesting his wonderment, while the Chinaman chattered excitedly.

Within the hotel a man had been watching and listening. He was a bewhiskered ruffian, and he strode forth and followed the crowd to the Dutchman's saloon. Cimarron Bill watched his tool depart, smiling darkly and muttering to himself:

"Good-by, Bob! You're going up against a hard proposition in Frank Merriwell, and it's not likely you'll call to collect that little sum of money from me. All the same, I hope you get in a shot, for you shoot straight, and you may make a round sum for my pocket, as I'll compel the old lady to lay down the cash. I'll be able to scare her into it by threatening to tell the whole story and bring her into the game as an accomplice. That will yank her around to her feet in short order, I opine."

For all of Bill's reputation as a "killer," he was willing to let this piece of work over to the attention of another.

So Gentle Bob followed Merriwell, an evil purpose in his black heart, nor knew that his employer believed and half hoped he might be walking to his own end.

Benchy burst into the saloon, uttering a cry of triumph.

"Here comes the dog!" he said. "Now I have you, you old duffer! You'll find out he can talk."

Schlitzenheimer stared at the door, through which the crowd followed Frank, and Bart, and the dog.

"Vos dot der tog?" he said.

"Do you take me for a monkey, you lobster-faced frankfurter?" saucily demanded the dog.

"Hey?" squawked the saloon-keeper, turning purple.

"Vot id vos? Dit I hear corectness?"

"If you didn't, spoon out your ears," advised Boxer.

"Be careful, Boxer," said Frank, reprovingly. "Don't be so free with your lip. You may offend the gentleman."

"Gentleman!" exclaimed the setter, in a tone of profound contempt. "Do you call that sourkraut barrel a gentleman? I'm surprised at you, Frank!"

At this there was a burst of laughter, and Schlitzenheimer turned as red as he had been pale a moment before.

"Vot vor did dot tog vanted to insult me?" he exclaimed, indignantly. "I dit not someding to him do!"

"Boxer, I'm surprised!" cried Frank. "You will get me into trouble with your careless language. I insist that you apologize immediately to the gentleman. I insist, sir!"

"Oh, very well," said the dog; "if you insist, I'll apologize. I was joking, anyway."

"And I add my own apology, Mr. Schlitzenheimer," said Merry. "I hope this will be sufficient?"

"Oh, yah, dot peen all righdt," said the Dutchman, at once. "But py dunder! der tickens id does peat to heard a tog dalking!"

"It's a good one on you, Fritz!" cried Benchy, triumphantly. "Remember your agreement! You're stuck!"

"Vale, I will stood py dot agreements," said the saloon-keeper, rather reluctantly, "efen if in pusiness id does preak me up. Und I vill sdant treat der crowdt vor. Sdep up, eferpody, und your trink name."

"That's the talk!" cried the dog. "You're not such a bad fellow, Schlitzzy."

Schlitzenheimer leaned on the bar with both hands and looked over at Boxer.

"Vot will you haf yourseluf?" he asked.

"Excuse me," said the setter; "I'm on the water wagon. Go ahead, gentlemen, and don't mind me."

So they lined up in front of the bar, expressing their amazement over the accomplishment of the dog and burdening Merriwell with questions, all of which Frank cheerfully answered or skillfully evaded.

Boxer had been lifted and placed on one end of the bar, where he immediately sat, surveying the line of men with his clear, intelligent eyes.

"Hello, Mike!" he called to the Irishman. "When did you leave the Old Dart?"

"It's goin' in three year now," answered the son of the Old Sod, civilly; "and me name's not Moike—it's Pat."

The dog seemed to wink shrewdly.

"It's all the same," he declared; "Mike or Pat makes no difference, as long as your last name is Murphy."

"But me last name's not Murphy at all, at all—it's O'Grady, av yez plaze."

"Thanks," snickered the dog. "I have it down pat now. It's a way I have of finding out a man's name when no one takes the trouble to introduce him. Drink hearty, Pat; the whiskey'll add to the beautiful tint of your nose."

"Begorra! it's a divvil the crayther is!" muttered Pat, nudging his nearest neighbor.

"Ah, there, Chink!" called the setter, seeming to get his eye on the Chinaman, who was staring open-mouthed. "How's the washee-washee business?"

"Oh, velly good, velly good!" answered the Celestial, hurriedly? backing off a little, his face yellowish white.

"I suppose you spit all over things when you sprinkle your ironing?" said the dog. "If you ever did that with a shirt of mine I'd chew your pigtail off."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the Irishman. "Begobs, thot's wan on you, Sing!"

"Vele," said Schlitzenheimer, holding up a glass of beer; "here vos goot health to der smardest tog vot effer vos."

"Drink hearty," said Boxer; and, with the exception of Frank and Bart, all swallowed their drinks. Not wishing anything to drink, and still desiring to join in so that the saloon-keeper might not be offended, Frank and Bart had taken cigars, which they slipped into their pockets.

"Dot tog peen der vonder der vorld uf," said Schlitzenheimer, gazing admiringly at Boxer. "Vot vill you soldt him vor?"

"There's not enough money in Arizona to buy him from me," answered Frank, at once.

"You know a good thing when you see it," chuckled the dog.

"Vos there anything exception talk vot he can do?" asked Fritz.

"Lots of things," answered Merry. "He can play cards."

"Beenuckle?" asked the Dutchman.

"You bet! He's a dabster at pinocle."

"Easy, Merry!" cautioned the setter, in a whisper. "If you want to skin the old balona sausage out of his sheckles, don't puff me up. I can beat him at his own game."

"Vale, I pet den tollars you can't dot do!" cried Schlitzenheimer. "I nefer vould acknowledgement dot a tog could peat me!"

Frank sternly turned on Boxer.

"What do you mean by getting me into such a scrape?" he demanded, shaking his finger at the setter. "You know I never gamble, and I will not bet on a game of cards. If you make any more such foolish talk, I'll not let you play at all."

The dog hung his head and looked quite ashamed.

"Beg pardon," he whined, softly. "I was joking again!"

"I'll blay der fun uf him vor," said Schlitzenheimer. "Id vill peen a creat jokes to said I had a came uf beenuckle blayed mit a tog. Come on."

He hurried out from behind the bar.

CHAPTER XI.

A GAME OF PINOCLE.

"Begorra! Oi'd loike to take a hand in this!" cried Pat O'Grady, as a square table was drawn out and the cards produced. "It's a shlick game av peenockle Oi play."

"But three handed——" said Frank.

"Be afther makin' the fourth yesilf."

"I have to hold the cards for Boxer, he having no hands of his own," explained Merry.

Then it was that Gentle Bob stepped forward, saying, in a very quiet voice and polite manner, that he would be pleased to enter the game.

Now, with the exception of Frank and Bart, all knew that Bob was a very bad man to offend, and so they were willing enough that he should play, and it was soon arranged.

Frank was keen enough to see in what manner the ruffianly-looking fellow with the quiet voice was regarded, and, as he was not in Holbrook in search of a quarrel, he raised no dissent. However, he gave Hodge a look that Bart understood, and the silent youth nodded. From that moment Bart watched Gentle Bob closely.

The crowd drew about the table, eager to witness a game of cards in which a dog took part.

Merry sat on a short bench, with Boxer at his side. The cards were cut, and the deal fell to Schlitzenheimer.

"Be careful, Dutchy," advised Boxer. "We're

watching you, and you'd better not try any slick tricks."

"Eferything on der lefel shall pe," assured the saloon-keeper, pulling at his long pipe.

O'Grady was likewise smoking, and his pipe contrasted ludicrously with that of Schlitzzenheimer.

When the cards were dealt, it fell the dog's turn to meld first. Frank spread out the cards and held them in front of Boxer's nose.

"I will meld one hundred aces," said the dog. "Put 'em down, Frank."

Merry did so.

"Sixty queens," called Boxer, and Merry spread them out.

"Lally ka lolly loka!" chattered Sing Lee, or something like that; whereupon Boxer seemed to fix the Chinaman with a scornful stare, and observed:

"You ought to take something for that. It must be painful."

"Gleatee Sklot!" gasped the Celestial. "Dogee hab a debbil!" And he backed away.

"That's right," said Boxer. "I like you a long distance off, the longer the distance the better I like you."

"Pay attention to the game," said Frank. "Are you going to meld anything else?"

"Forty trumps, twenty spades and twenty hearts," said Boxer.

"Dunder!" muttered Schlitzzenheimer, and his hands trembled so that he dropped some of the cards.

"Get a basket," snickered the dog; and the crowd laughed loudly at the saloon-keeper's expense.

When all the melding was finished they prepared to play.

"I'll lead the ace of trumps," said Boxer.

Frank ran the cards over.

"It's here," he said. "But I didn't see it."

"What's the matter with your eyes?" snapped the dog. "Didn't I meld one hundred aces? You ought to learn something about this game!"

"I seldom play cards," said Merry, apologetically.

"Well, you want to keep your eyes open!" exclaimed Boxer, sharply. "These chaps may try to skin us."

At this Gentle Bob looked up, and said:

"I do not mind a little faking none whatever, but I sure objects to being called a skin, either by a dog or his master, so I opine it will be best for somebody to apologize."

And, as he made this remark, he suddenly whipped

forth a pistol, with which he covered both Frank and the dog, but held the weapon more in Merry's direction.

Cimarron Bill's tool had found the opportunity he sought, and he meant to make the most of it.

Merry saw in the fellow's eyes the full extent of his evil purpose.

"If the apology is not forthcoming instanter," murmured the ruffian, "I shall puncture the wonderful talking dog with a bullet!"

Now it seemed that Bob had Frank at a great disadvantage, but at this point Bart Hodge shoved the muzzle of a pistol against the fellow's ear and harshly commanded:

"Put up that gun—instanter! If you don't I'll blow the whole top of your head off!"

But Bart had made a miscalculation, for Gentle Bob had not come alone to the saloon, having noted well that Frank Merriwell had a friend. He had picked up a chap of his own sort, and now this fellow had a gun at Bart's head.

"You're the one who'll lose the ruff o' his head!" he said. "You put up your gun!"

Gentle Bob still sat pistol in hand, but Boxer had taken advantage of an opportunity to drop down from the bench to the floor.

Of a sudden there came a wild yell from Bob, who kicked out with his feet and flung himself backward, his pistol being discharged straight up at the ceiling.

Boxer had seized him by the leg beneath the table.

Instantly there was a fearful uproar in the saloon. The action of the dog had disconcerted the plans of every one. Hodge ducked and whirled, catching the ruffian at his back a fearful blow on the solar plexus that drove him slam against the bar, and he went down and "out."

Merry went across the table in a leap at Gentle Bob, from whom he tore the revolver that the fellow was trying to use on Boxer.

"Let up, boy," said Frank to the dog. "I'll attend to his case."

Boxer seemed reluctant to let go, but he did so at the second command.

Merriwell pinned Bob down and deftly disarmed

him, removing every weapon, which he passed over to Schlitzenheimer.

"Take care of these tools, sir," he said, "until I leave town. It will save this fellow's life—perhaps."

"Und dot vill peen a pity!" muttered the saloon-keeper, who had no love for the ruffian, but held him in great awe.

Having disarmed Bob, Merry rose and commanded him to get up.

The fellow rose immediately and sprang at Frank, trying to strike him.

Boxer would have mingled in, but Bart held him in check, saying:

"Keep out of it. Frank can attend to that case now without any of your aid."

Hodge was not mistaken, as Merriwell quickly demonstrated. He avoided the blows of the ruffian and quickly knocked him down. Bob rose, only to be struck in the eye and sent to the floor again. Four times this happened, and then Merry picked the wretch up, carried him bodily to the door, and kicked him into the street, observing:

"If you come back here or bother me again, I'll send you to the hospital for a month!"

And the dog barked with great satisfaction.

CHAPTER XII.

BOXER TO THE RESCUE.

The second ruffian was ejected, and Frank and the talking dog were regarded with unbounded admiration by every one present.

"I neffer haf seen Shentle Pob done upness pefore," remarked Schlitzenheimer. "He vos a pad man."

"You bettee!" put in Sing Lee, who crept forth from behind a barrel, where he had taken refuge during the encounter. "Him velly bad. Him shootee, stabbee, killee."

"An' so he will," nodded Pat O'Grady, seeming quite concerned. "It's me opinion he wur lookin' fer throuble whin he came here."

"Well, he found it," smiled Merry.

"That's what!" said Boxer, wagging his tail and looking up at Frank, knowingly. "But he tasted disagreeable. You don't suppose it will make me sick, do you?"

Frank stooped and patted the dog's head.

"I hope not," he laughed. "You got hold of his leg just in time, old boy."

"Oh, I didn't dally when I saw him throw his gun out," said Boxer, winking rapidly with both eyes. "I allowed he was going to begin shooting directly."

"Uf you vould tookit my device," said Schlitzenheimer, "you couldt out uf dis town get a hurriness indo."

"Thot's roight," nodded O'Grady. "It's moighty dangerous to remain after this, Oi know."

"Pob vill got vor heemseluf another gun, und he vill look vor you on der sdreet," declared the saloon-keeper.

"Well, he may find us, eh, Boxer?" smiled Frank.

"Sure thing," said the dog. "And I reckon you can shoot as quick and as straight as he can."

Schlitzenheimer shook his head and averred that Bob was the greatest pistol shot known in those parts, which, however, did not seem to alarm Frank Merriwell in the least.

Suddenly there came a scream from the street, the voice being that of a girl, and the sound indicating that she was in great fear and distress.

Frank sprang to the open door, Boxer barking at his heels, and Hodge was not slow in following.

The cry had issued from the lips of June Arlington, who was then on her way to the post office to mail the letter she had written, not wishing her mother to see it.

June had arrived in the vicinity of the saloon as Gentle Bob was turning away. She noted that the man's face was cut and bruised and one eye was swollen. His appearance led her to look at him with something like sympathy, when, of a sudden, he turned on her, smiling evilly, and seized her arm.

"Derned ef you ain't a right peert gal!" said the fellow, insolently. "Gimme a kiss, sweetness."

Then June screamed and tried to break away, striking at him with her clinched fist. She was frightened and angry.

"Stop yer squarmin'!" snarled the fellow, who had thought to kiss her quickly before she could make much resistance, and then hasten along, it being his intention to boast of what he had done.

But June would not stop. She saw a tall, athletic young man come bounding through an open doorway into the street, followed closely by a dog and another young man. Her eyes recognized the one in advance, and she cried out:

"Mr. Merriwell, help—help, quick!"

With a growl of rage, Gentle Bob released her and turned. As he did so, the dog, terrible in his fury, shot past Frank and made a great spring through the air straight at Bob's throat.

Bob threw up his arm, and the teeth of the dog fastened on it. The force of the creature's leap hurled the ruffian backward.

The man went down in the dust, and Boxer was at him with all the fury of a mad animal. He would have torn the wretch to pieces right before their eyes, but Frank fearlessly grasped the dog and pulled him away, at the same time crying commandingly to him.

"Keep him off!" palpitated Bob, now filled with a great terror for the fierce animal. "Don't let him touch me ag'in! He's near bit me to pieces now!"

"You got just what you deserved, and no more, you miserable creature!" said Frank, indignantly.

Then he turned and asked June what Bob had been doing.

"Oh, he grasped me, and he tried to kiss me!"

"Did he!" grated Merry, very white. "Then I should have let Boxer finish him!"

"No, no!" gasped June.

"No, no!" exclaimed Bob.

"On your knees!" cried Frank, in ringing tones—"on your knees and apologize to the young lady! If you don't do it, so help me, I'll let Boxer get at you again!"

Bob did not hesitate. Ruffian and desperado though

he was reputed to be, he cast himself on his knees before June and humbly begged her pardon, all the while watching Boxer, who glared back at him and licked his chops.

"Get up and go, you pitiful coward!" said Frank. "Keep out of my sight while I'm in town, and be careful not to try any dirty tricks. If you hurt me, Boxer will eat you up; if you hurt Boxer, I'll have your life! Go!"

The wretch lost not a moment in getting away.

CHAPTER XIII.

FRANK AND JUNE.

Frank stooped and picked up the letter June had dropped. He was restoring it to her when his eye caught the address upon it, and he started in astonishment.

"MR. RICHARD MERRIWELL,
"Fardale."

That was the name and address he read. Then he looked closely at June and recognized her.

"Miss Arlington?" he exclaimed, his hat in his hand; "is it possible?"

The color was coming back into her cheeks.

"Mr. Merriwell," she said, "let me thank you for coming so quickly to my assistance."

"It was Boxer who got there first. But I'm amazed to see you here—here in Arizona."

"I don't doubt it."

"What brings you to this place?"

"I came with my mother."

"Your—your mother?" he said, still further astonished. "And your father—he is here, also?"

"No, sir."

"He is coming?"

"No, sir, I believe not."

Merry had thought at once that there might be a very good reason why D. Roscoe Arlington should come to Holbrook to learn just how well the hired ruffians of the syndicate had performed their tasks,

but the presence there of Mrs. Arlington and June, without D. Roscoe, rather bewildered him.

June looked back toward the hotel windows, thinking it must be that her mother had heard her cry and would be looking forth; but was relieved to see nothing of the lady.

"You were on your way to mail this letter?" said Frank, divining her destination.

"Yes."

"May I accompany you to make sure you are not molested further?"

She accepted his escort.

Bart had lingered near, and Frank presented him.

"An old school and college chum, Miss Arlington," he said, "and one of my closest friends."

Bart lifted his hat and bowed, smiling a bit on the pretty girl. In his way, which was dark and silent, he was almost every bit as handsome as Frank himself, and it is no cause of wonderment that June could not wholly repress the flash of admiration that came into her splendid eyes.

On his part, Bart was quite smitten with her, and he stood watching Frank walk away at her side, Boxer following, smiling without envy, yet thinking his friend fortunate to have the company of such a charming girl for even a brief time in that part of the country.

Frank found himself somewhat embarrassed, not a little to his surprise, as he walked down the street with June. The girl was the daughter of the man who was doing his best to bring upon Merriwell complete ruin—or seemed to be doing his best to that end, for Frank could not know that all his trouble at the Queen Mystery had not risen directly from D. Roscoe Arlington. Much less did he suspect that any great part of it came without Mr. Arlington's knowledge and through the vengeful malice of Mrs. Arlington.

It was not agreeable to speak of this matter with June, and still in his heart Merry was more than eager to know what had brought the girl to Holbrook. He had not forgotten that it was the hand of June that had restored to him the precious papers relating to

the mines when those papers had been stolen from him in Fardale, a service for which he remained grateful.

Further than this, Frank had learned that Dick had a deep interest in June—so deep, indeed, that the boy himself did not quite suspect its measure. Merry had been able to read his brother, and his good sense told him beyond question that never would Dick hold his hand from the person of his most persistent enemy simply because that enemy's sister thus entreated him, unless there was back of it all a feeling of affection for the sister that was of no small magnitude.

That June cared something for Dick, Merry more than half suspected, and the sight of the name on the letter she now carried in her hand seemed very good evidence that this was not false fancy on his part, for did she not care for the lad far away in Fardale, then why should she write to him?

It was June herself who relieved Frank's embarrassment by earnestly turning to him and beginning speech.

"Mr. Merriwell," she said, with such a sober face that he was greatly surprised, "I have wanted to see you since you came into town."

"Then you knew I had entered town?"

"I saw you; and I have wanted to speak with you to warn you."

"To warn me?" said Frank. "Of what?"

"Of your great danger, for you are in danger here. You have in this town a man who would kill you."

"I think we lately parted from such a man," smiled Merry.

"But he is not the one."

"Is there another?"

"Oh, yes! I saw him! Perhaps I saved your life."

At this Frank gave a great start of surprise and asked her how that could be, upon which she told him how Cimarron Bill had shot at him from the window, and how she had spoiled the aim of the would-be murderer. She held back the fact that the man had fired from one of the windows of her mother's rooms, and that her mother had shortly before been in consultation

with him. Still Frank was keen enough to see that she was hiding something, and he had the good discernment to come close to guessing the truth.

"Miss Arlington," he said, "it seems that I owe you my life. I heard the shot, but I could not be sure it was fired at me. If I mistake not, the man who fired it has a deadly aim, and I could not have escaped but for your quickness in spoiling his sight. I owe you a great deal more than I can ever repay."

June knew something of the truth, and she was aware that her father was concerned in a movement the accomplishment of which meant ruin to both Frank and Dick; therefore this acknowledgement by Frank of his indebtedness to her caused her to flush with shame.

"It is I who owe you a great deal!" she exclaimed. "See what you have just done—saved me from a ruffian! But your brother—Dick—he did more. He saved me once from the fangs of furious dogs, at another time from being killed in a runaway, and that is not all. It is I who owe you much more than I can ever repay. My brother"—she choked a little—"my brother is Dick's enemy, yet, for a promise to me, Dick has been easy with him and has not forced him in disgrace from Fardale. Oh, Mr. Merriwell!" she suddenly exclaimed, feeling her utter inability to express herself, "it seems to me that never before was a girl placed in such a position as I find myself in! What can I do?"

"You can do nothing, Miss June," he said, gently. "You are not to blame for anything that may happen, and I shall not forget that. I am very sorry for you, as I fancy you must be far from comfortable."

At this her pride returned, and she straightened, thinking she could not acknowledge to him that her people were in the wrong.

"You know there is always two sides to any question," she said, "and there may be as much of right on one side as the other. I presume my father has every reason to think himself right."

Now June knew that it was her mother who hated Dick and Frank with undying intensity, while her

father cared very little about either of the Merriwells, save that he had been led to wonder immoderately at the success of Frank in fighting the syndicate; but she wished to avoid the shame of confessing that her mother had such a vengeful nature and could enter with vindictiveness into an affair that might well be left to men.

Frank had no desire to hurt her feelings. He understood her pride and sensitiveness, and he said:

"It is very likely you are correct about that. At any rate, we will not argue it. It is no matter for us to speak of, as what we might say would not change the situation in the least. Still, if I should become satisfied that your father had the right in this thing, even though it stripped me of my last dollar and made me a beggar, I would surrender to him immediately."

She did not doubt him then, and she saw that the character of Frank Merriwell was one to be admired, his one concern being for perfect and complete justice, even though by justice he might be the sufferer. Inwardly she was struck with the conviction that her father seldom made inquiry into the justice of any project he wished to carry through, his one concern being to accomplish his ends by any method whatever, so long as it did not involve him in difficulties of a nature too serious.

"Mr. Merriwell," she said, quickly, "you must leave Holbrook just as soon as you can!"

"Why?"

"The man who tried to shoot you is here—the man with the wicked face and evil eyes."

"I am not given to running from one man."

"It's not that. He is an assassin! See how he tried to kill you without giving you a show! You don't know what moment he may try it again. If he were to meet you face to face it would be different. You cannot defend yourself from attacks in the dark. You have no show."

"Well, there is some truth in that," smiled Merry.

"He will attack you that way again. I know it! He will strike at you from behind."

"Possibly."

"You must go! You must leave Holbrook before dark!"

"I hardly fancy it," muttered Frank, frowning. "I do not like the notion. It leaves an unpleasant taste in my mouth to think of running away from Cimarron Bill."

For, although June had not mentioned the ruffian by name, not knowing it herself, her description of him had satisfied Frank that it could be no other than the baffled scoundrel who had twice attempted to seize the Queen Mystery mine.

"But you will go?" she urged.

"I'll think of it."

They had reached the post office and were now standing in front of the building. Bart Hodge was sauntering slowly in their direction on the opposite side of the street, having kept within easy pistol shot of Frank all the while.

Frank's words did not satisfy June. He saw she was in distress.

"If you will not go for your own sake," she said, "please do for mine!"

He looked astonished.

"For your sake?" he said. "Why, I had not an idea in the world that it could be of so much concern to you. I'm afraid I do not understand why it should be. Now, if Dick——"

She stopped him with a gesture, her face flushing very warm.

"Don't!" she entreated, in a low voice. "At least, you are his own brother! But it is for my sake more than yours. I cannot explain. Do not embarrass me! But promise me you will go—for my sake!"

Having a quick perception, Frank suddenly fancied he caught an inkling of the truth. In that moment he saw Mrs. Arlington dealing with Cimarron Bill. It was a conjecture, but it struck him hard as the truth.

This, then, was the reason why June wished him to flee from Holbrook. She feared that her mother somehow would become involved in the murder in case Cimarron Bill should carry into execution his dastardly purpose.

Of course, it was not possible for him to be sure he had struck upon the truth.

"It is hard for me to refuse a girl when she corners me like this," he smiled.

"You'll go?" persisted June.

"If you insist."

"Oh, thank you—thank you! I shall not breathe easy until I know you are well out of this dreadful place."

"And I shall not breathe easy as long as I know you remain here, where you may become subject to such insults as to-day happened. It is no place for you at the present time. Holbrook is well enough in its way; but you are too pretty to walk its streets without an escort. Western gentlemen are gentlemen in every sense of the word, and no man can hold the honor of a lady more sacred; but Western ruffians are dangerous, and it seems there are several of the latter class in this place."

"I must remain while mother stays here; I must stay with her."

The letter was dropped in the post office, and June urged Frank to depart at once; but he insisted on escorting her back to the hotel.

Boxer kept close to their heels, seeming to listen to their conversation at times; but, strange though it may appear, he made no attempt to take part in it, nor did he speak as much as one word during all the time that he seemed neglected by his master.

Frank made a sign to Bart, who crossed the street and joined them.

"I have decided to leave town right away," said Merry. "Have the horses saddled and prepared. We'll start as soon as I have escorted Miss Arlington back to the hotel."

Hodge looked surprised.

"The horses are in no condition, Frank," he said. "You know they are in sore need of a good rest."

"I know it, Bart; but I have a reason for this. We'll go. Get them ready, please."

"All right," said Bart, as he turned away to carry out instructions.

CHAPTER XIV.

UNTO DEATH!

The sun was down in the west and night was gathering over the face of the world when Frank and Bart rode forth from Holbrook, setting their faces to the southwest.

Boxer trotted behind them.

They were not molested, although Frank remained in constant expectation of an attack until they were fairly clear of the place and had it a long rifle shot at their backs.

The blue night grew upon the distant plain, and the stars were coming gently forth over their heads as they rode down into the distance, the beating hoofs of the ponies making rhythm on the baked ground. The first cool breath of night touched their heated cheeks with grateful kisses.

"How did you happen to do it, Frank?" asked Bart.

"I found out a thing or two," Merry answered. "Cimarron Bill is in town, and he was watching his chance to get another shot at me."

"Another?" exclaimed Bart; upon which Merry explained how Bill had fired at him already.

"It was rather dangerous to stay there, and I couldn't resist when a pretty girl took enough interest in me to urge me to get away," Frank laughed. "We had some sport with our talking dog, and now——"

"You can't mean to ride far?"

"Remember the hut we passed on the way into town? It's not very far. We'll stop there to-night."

"Good!" said Bart; and they rode on.

Coming to the deserted hut, they stopped there. The horses were cared for, and Frank and Bart entered the hut with their blankets, where they prepared to sleep until toward morning, planning to rise before daybreak and get an early start, so that some distance could be covered ere the sun rose.

Both of the young men were weary, and they lost little time in drawing their blankets about them and rolling on the floor. Boxer curled in a corner and went

to sleep. The door of the hut was left open to admit the cool night air.

Frank fell asleep at once, and Bart was not slow in following his example.

They were awakened in the middle of the night by a snarl, a cry, a struggle and a fall. Both sat up, grasping their ready weapons.

The moon was up, and by its light, which streamed in at the wide-open door, a man and a dog were seen struggling on the floor. The dog was Boxer, who had leaped at the throat of the man as he came slipping in at the open door.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Hodge. "What's the meaning of this?"

"One of my friends has arrived," said Frank. "Boxer has him."

The struggle was fierce and terrible. The dog seemed to have the man by the throat. Before either Merry or Hodge could interfere the moonlight glinted on something bright in the hand of the man, who struck and struck again.

Not a sound came from the dog. But the bright thing in the man's hand grew suddenly dark.

"Heavens!" gasped Frank, leaping forward. "He has a knife!"

Then a terrible sound came from the throat of the man, and he lifted his arm no more. The thing in his hand, dark and dripping, fell to the floor of the hut.

A moment later the man rolled into the shadow, and then Boxer was seen dragging himself away, while the man lay still.

"Boxer! Boxer!" cried Frank, bending over the dog. "Are you hurt, boy? Merciful goodness! he ripped your whole side open with that knife!"

Hodge struck a light and bent over the man who lay in the shadow. When the match burned out in his fingers he dropped it and stepped out to join Merriwell, who had picked up the dog and carried the creature into the open air.

Bart found Merry sitting on the ground, with the

dog in his arms. Boxer had been cut in a terrible manner, and was bleeding in a way that plainly told his end was near.

"Oh, the wretch!" choked Merry, in a husky voice. "Oh, the wretch who did this! He ought to be hanged!"

"No need of hanging for him," said Hodge. "He'll be beyond that in less than three minutes."

"You mean——"

"He's pretty near dead now. Boxer's teeth found his jugular vein."

"Who was it, Bart?"

"The fellow who made the row in Schlitzheimer's saloon."

"Gentle Bob?"

"Yes."

"One of Cimarron Bill's hired tools, or I am mistaken! He followed us here and tried to creep in on us with that knife, meaning to finish the job at which he failed in town. Boxer saved us. Good old Boxer! Poor old Boxer!"

The dog whined a little on hearing this name from Frank's lips, and feebly wagged his tail. The moonlight showed his eyes turned toward Merry's face.

"Is it so bad there's no show for him?" asked Hodge, in genuine distress.

"No show!" sobbed Frank. "He's finished, Bart! It's a shame! The most knowing dog in the whole world! And he has to die like this, killed by a human being that is more of a beast than he!"

"It's a shame!" said Bart.

The dog licked Frank's hand. Merry bowed his head, and tears started from his eyes.

"Poor Boxer!" he choked. "Boxer, we have to part here. You're going to another country, where I must follow in time. It's all up with you. You may find your first master over there; but he'll never love you more than I have. Good-by, Boxer!"

The dog uttered a whine, but no word came from his lips. The farewell he gave was spoken in dog language alone. And so his life ended in Frank's arms, with the moonlight falling on them and the stillness of the Arizona night all around.

Hodge entered the hut, only to come forth, bringing the blankets and looking very sick.

"For Heaven's sake, let's get away from here!" he exclaimed.

"The man in there?"

"Dead!" said Bart. "The place is gory! I'm faint from it."

Boxer's body was wrapped in a blanket, and they mounted and rode away, Frank carrying the dead dog in his arms to find a burial place where there could be no chance that his body should be exhumed by any prowling thing of the desert.

* * * * *

There are those in Holbrook who will swear they have heard a dog talk, and it is dangerous to laugh at them. Tell them that the dog was made to talk by his master, who was a clever ventriloquist, and you are likely to find a fight on your hands. So if you happen to find yourself in Holbrook and some one mentions the wonderful dog, hold your peace and keep out of trouble.

THE END.

The Next Number (367) Will Contain

DICK MERRIWELL ON THE DIAMOND;

OR,

The Boy Wonder's Backstop.

LIFTS THE LEATHER A LONG ONE.

**In the Nick of Time—Outplays a Whole Team
and an Umpire—Something About
Cadet Smart's "Get Back"
at Prof. Gooch.**

FARDALE SPECIAL, April 2.—Read about the great fake and the great game in No. 367.



NEW YORK, April 18, 1903.

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APPLAUSE.

PRIZE LETTER NO. 112.

I have been reading your Tip Top Weeklies from No. 186, and there is nobody I like as well as Dick Merriwell. I know a girl whose father would not let her read the Tip Tops at all until one day he began to read them, and now he will not leave them until he has finished them. He is always in a hurry for the next one to come. I enjoy the Tip Tops very much, especially the parts where they go out evenings and get into all kinds of scrapes. June Arlington is a good girl, and I think that Chester Arlington would be a fine fellow had not his mother spoiled him. I think that Dick and his friends are very nice to treat Chester and other enemies as well as they do. Nothing, do I believe, would make me give up the Tip Tops now, after reading them so long. I like Brad Buckhart next to Dick. Mr. Standish is a very good writer, and he describes things so thoroughly that anybody cannot help liking his works after they have read them once. Any boy who would try to copy Dick Merriwell would make an honest man if he succeeded. I am only thirteen years old, but thought that I would try and write, as I have not seen any letters in the Applause Column from this place. I think that

Dick will marry either Doris or June, either of whom will make him a good wife, and Brad will marry Zona Desmond. Well, I must close now, wishing long life and prosperity to Burt L. Standish, Street & Smith, Tip Top and all of its readers.

Montpelier, Vt.

EVA L. RICHARDSON.

Another girl writer to the front singing the praises of Tip Top. It is well done, too.

PRIZE LETTER NO. 113.

Permit me to add my testimonial to that of the many readers and ardent admirers of Tip Top—America's foremost weekly. If parents would only read one or two copies of Tip Top, their prejudices against these paper-colored magazines would be overcome. Mr. Standish accomplishes more good through Tip Top than he can ever realize. Dick Merriwell is an ideal hero, and a model for the young American. If every reader would imitate his example, it would only be a short time before reform schools and penitentiaries would be a thing of the past, and I am not alone in my belief. Frank has many admirers, but it is my opinion that it will not be long ere Dick will have a host even larger than that of his brother. Mr. Standish portrays his stories with such vividness that the reader is not merely an onlooker, but is a participant in all of Fardale's battles. With best wishes for the success of Tip Top and its many readers, I wish to be remembered as sincerely yours,

FRANK G. MENKE.

Cleveland, O.

A concise letter, full of good, sound praise for Tip Top. Where will it stand on the Prize List?

PRIZE LETTER NO. 114.

I have been reading Tip Top for over three years, and have followed Frank Merriwell's life and career up to the point where his brother Dick appears on the scene. It is surely my intention to keep on reading Tip Top as long as I am able to. These publications are, without a doubt, as far superior to other five-cent publications as they could possibly be, and are deserving of a much better binding. They give to the mind of the growing boy something that he needs to make him more manly and self-reliant. The stories are always strong in morals and superbly interesting from start to finish. The descriptions are perfect and draw on the blackboard of your mind such an excellent picture that you imagine yourself transported there and enjoying the balmy airs of summer or shivering at the bleak winds of winter. As far as the athletic descriptions are concerned, you are positively carried away by the tremendous enthusiasm of the games and imagine yourself cheering for good old Fardale with all your heart and soul. All the characters in the story that are intended to be noble are certainly made so, and are not the tiresome, sing-songy heroes of most of the present boys' books, who are poor and work up to be millionaires, or find some wonderful treasure on an unknown island, located the other side of nowhere. So here's a toast to you and your Tip Tops: "May you succeed in the near future of having your publications recognized by the American public as the finest in the world." Yours truly,

ROSCOE H. POWERS.

Ravenswood, Chicago.

We all join in your toast to Tip Top, and we add one with three hearty cheers for our readers, one and all.

PRIZE LETTER NO. 115.

Rah! Rah! Rah! Tip Top! Tip Top is the warmest paper written by the "warmest" author out. Who ever read a Tip Top that did not fall in love with the greatest part of its boys and girls? I once would not read Tip Top, and laughed at those who did, but one day a friend gave me one with a baseball story in it and I liked it very well. I decided to get the next copy, and now I would no more think of missing my Tip Top every week than I would of missing my dinner. Once I smoked cigarettes, but after reading a few Tip Tops I began to think about what cigarettes would do for me, and now I never do (what Tip Top says is one of the most harmful of habits). I believe Tip Top is doing more good among the boys of America than any other paper, and I advise the boys to follow what it says and they will soon see great results for their good. I like Frank best, with Dick a close second. I wanted Frank to marry Elsie, but I am satisfied with the way Mr. Burt L. saw fit to arrange it. I have

just finished reading No. 347, and think it surely is a "dandy." Hoping to "catch" a pen with this, I will close, with three cheers for Tip Top and Mr. Burt L. Standish,
Burnet, Tex. H. STEVENS.

We, too, wish you luck in your efforts to win a pen. That rests with the readers.

PRIZE LETTER NO. 116.

I wish to herewith express my approbation for your world renowned and esteemed publication, Tip Top. It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you on the wonderful success of the Tip Top Weekly. As the diamond is the most valuable of precious stones, so is the Tip Top the most valuable paper in the world of literature. The secret of its boundless success is in its being superior in thought to all weeklies. Its wonderful judgment of human character with the method that it adopts in warning the readers against vice and wrong doing is highly commendable. Too much cannot be said in regard to your precious paper, for it treats on the kindness and forgiveness of the two most important personages, Frank and Dick Merriwell. Would that there were more like them, for they are perfect specimens of moral and physical manhood. If an artist wishes to make a perfect picture he must have a perfect model, so if a person wishes to attain the highest moral and physical standing they must have a perfect model. Again thanking you for the Tip Top and the space that this letter occupies, I close, wishing to win one of the twelve prizes and to see this in print. Yours very truly,

Chenoa, Ill.

ROY RENN.

One more letter singing the praises of Tip Top. More coming in every mail, making a spirited contest.

PRIZE LETTER NO. 117.

Hurrah for Tip Top Weekly! How is this for praise for the greatest boys' weekly in the United States. Last Friday I was going to Portland on the cars, and as I had a Tip Top Weekly with me, I took it out of my pocket and began to read it. I had not been reading long before a man came up and took me by the arm, saying, "If I were you I would throw that paper out of the window." I asked him why he wanted me to throw it away. He said that it was not fit for me to read. When he said that I turned over to the first chapter of the paper and asked him to read it. He took the paper out of my hand and began to read. I asked him how he liked it, and he was so interested that he did not answer me. Before we had reached Portland he had read the Weekly through. I asked him a number of questions, and before we reached our stopping place I had found out that I had been talking with a minister. He said I am glad to see you reading such a good paper, and I hope that you will stick to Tip Top Weekly as long as you live. If you do as I tell you, you will be one of the brightest boys and best athletes that Brunswick ever had. The minister said that he would buy Tip Top Weekly each week as long as he lived. I wish I had found out what his name was, but he had gone before I could ask him. I would like to receive letters from other Tip Top readers. I hope Tip Top Weekly, Burt L. Standish and Street & Smith will live forever. I remain, a constant reader of your noble Tip Top Weekly,

Brunswick, Me.

JAMES F. SNOW.

Your friend was not the first minister who has said that Tip Top was a book well worth reading. He holds the same opinion that many others do.

I see that the prize letters are gradually increasing, but as I am not all all sure that I could be successful in winning one of the prizes, I shall be content to see my letter published in a less conspicuous column. I have not in the least changed my opinion of Burt L. Standish's ability to please the American youth in writing the most fascinating book it has ever been my pleasure to read. It fulfills our highest expectations in providing two of the finest specimens of manhood. Oftentimes in reading other books we experience a strong sense of disappointment at the end. Such is never the case with our Tip Top. It never disappoints. I hope you will not exclude my letter from your columns because of its lengthiness, but you surely know how hard it is to stop when praising our dear old Tip Top.

Topeka, Kansas.

EDITH M. ROOT.

Well said, and not too long to occupy a prominent place in Tip Top where all our many friends may see it.

I am 15 years of age and at present am a night engineer at a pumping station of railroad construction work. In my spare moments I enjoy reading very much the adventures and doings of Frank Merriwell. The Tip Top Weekly is a good, instructive publication, and shows what a young American youth with push can accomplish. I remain, respectfully yours,

Duncansville, Pa.

WAYNE O'SHELL.

True for you. Many is the strong word of high praise out of old Penn. State.

I had nothing to do one day, so I went into a book dealer's and I picked up a Tip Top Weekly. I bought it, took it home and read it. Since then (exactly one month ago) I have read twenty-two copies, including some back numbers. Since then I have been happy and now I can hardly wait until they arrive. They are better than any two-dollar books, and I would rather have them than any others.

CAVANAGH SOMERVILLE.

Georgetown, Ontario, Canada.

We hope the following months will prove as interesting as your first with Tip Top.

I send you the following "gem," which I hope may be considered worthy of publication in the Tip Top Applause column.

Yes! Tip Top Weekly is the name
Of a paper known to fame.
That's certainly right
It's out of sight
Put that in your pipe and smoke it.

Frank Merriwell was the first hero
Whom, all the old-time readers know,
Was made of the stuff
To back his bluff
Whene'er he saw fit to make it.

But now another one appears
Who, from the sound of prolonged cheers,
Will yet receive
Can we believe
It? More praise than his famous brother.

And still the contest wages fierce
O'er the two rivals, June, Doris.
From which one Dick
Shall take his pick
Is the question which concerns us.

What ho! ye wearers of the blue,
Come rally 'round our fair queen true.
We'll wage the strife
As long as life
And cry, June never, Doris forever.

Montpelier, Ohio.

Yours truly,

T. T. A.

By all means the verses are worthy of the Applause Column. Many fine specimens appear there often, and we are always glad to add to their number.

I have read the Tip Top Weekly from 253 to the last number, and think it is "hot stuff." Although I am quite old and have seen much of the world, I have taken quite a fancy to college life and literature. I enjoy the questions and answers that are published in your books. I expect to leave to-night for Detroit, Mich., U. S. A., and so I shall have to look up your next number. I find that there are quite a number of lads in Montreal that read your book. The boys would like to see more hockey matches and out-of-door sports published. I am the man that played on the St. Nicholas hockey team and covered the goal for them in 1899. Of the girl question, I most respect Miss June Arlington (she is a corker and a blooming fine girl). Bill Bradley has caught my eye, and I hope he develops into a mighty fine athlete. I would like to hear from Frank, Bart, Browning, Ready and the rest of the bunch, Danny Griswold and Buck Stubbs included. Regards to all, I am,


Montreal, Que.

JAMES AUSTIN SEEMORE, H. A. S.

It is a pleasure to hear from one who is so apt at that glorious game of hockey, and we hope your future work will be as successful as when you were cover point for the St. Nicholas team.

Tip Top Physical Culture Department

"IT IS A CRIME TO BE WEAK"

Edited by  Prof. FOURMEN

Accuracy and Strategy in Pitching.

CONTROL

There is one factor in pitching which is as necessary to successful play as the power to "curve" the ball at will. And that is accuracy, or the control of the ball, which enables a pitcher to deliver it exactly where he wishes to. If you cannot deliver the ball to the bat with a certain degree of accuracy, which must amount to a certainty so far as you and the catcher are concerned, you cannot consider yourself a first-class pitcher, even though you may possess full control over the various curves.

Accuracy in straight pitching is necessary, but when the "curve" is added, accuracy becomes a two-fold necessity. Whenever a pitcher acquires the power to curve the ball and to direct it wherever he likes at the same time, he may justly consider himself an expert in the art, or at least that he has laid a very solid foundation.

The want of accuracy has put out many a light which promised to shine brightly and which otherwise would have done so. Therefore, let every would-be pitcher bear these very important facts in mind, namely, that curves alone do not always win the game, that they are only valuable auxiliaries, and that much attention and practice must be devoted toward acquiring that perfect control over the ball which will render the curves most effective.

In practicing accuracy, you should not fail to be systematic. You must avoid carelessness as a fatal error. Whenever you find that you are not as successful as you should be in attaining skill you should carefully examine into your method of practice for the error, and when it is found, carefully correct it. If these directions are

strictly observed they will be certain to prove equal to the emergency.

.. ..

TRY YOUR ACCURACY

The question will doubtless arise as to what is meant by "accuracy." On general principles, I would say that whenever a pitcher becomes expert enough to throw a ball through an opening sixteen inches square from a distance of 50 feet four times out of five, he can consider that his practice has not been thrown away altogether. Unerring skill is never attained. A ball will sometimes slip in the hand of the most expert professional and a wild throw is the result.

.. ..

NEED OF STRATEGY

Strategy is to pitching what good generalship is to an army in battle. As an aid it is invaluable in these days of advanced skill in baseball playing. A pitcher who cannot exercise a good degree of this very necessary accomplishment will hardly hope to succeed unless he is such a prodigy in the matter of "curves" as to be able to "strike out" the batsmen as fast as they take their places at the bat.

.. ..

WHAT IS STRATEGY?

Strategy consists of two principal things: First, to deceive the judgment of the batsman in order to prevent him from making effective hits, and second, to deceive the base runner or to intimidate him in order to prevent him from running the bases. Strategy, with a view to deceive the

batsman may be practiced in various ways, which I will now discuss.

.. ..

**CHANGE OF
DELIVERY**

By this is meant a change in delivery from a swift to a slow ball, or the reverse. In most cases, it is very effective. By the time that two or three balls have been swiftly delivered, the batsman is instinctively on the lookout for more of the same sort and prepares himself accordingly. If a slow ball is now delivered the batsman if he strikes at all will strike too quickly. The pitcher should therefore bend his whole energy toward producing a feeling of uncertainty in the minds of the batsmen.

.. ..

**DISGUISE
YOUR MOTIONS**

With most batsmen it will be necessary to disguise your change of play in order to deceive them. Batsmen soon learn the habitual motions of a pitcher in delivery, and in order for the pitcher to successfully practice any deception on them he must carefully disguise his actual motions in delivery. A great pretense of throwing a swift ball can be checked in time to make the actual delivery rather slow; and on the other hand a swift ball can be delivered with but few violent motions, with some practice.

.. ..

**LEARN SEVERAL
STYLES OF
THROWING**

Batsmen will look for a swift ball to follow violent motions in its delivery, and for a slow ball when the motions in delivery are not violent. This is instinctive. The motions in delivery of most pitchers are peculiar to themselves, and the batsmen soon learn them. It would, therefore, be an excellent thing for one who is learning to pitch to practice a variety of styles of throwing and have them so thoroughly at his command that he can constantly change during a game without embarrassment to himself. By these means the batsman is kept continually in doubt as to what is coming next, and is, therefore, continually "out of form," and in no condition to do effective work.

.. ..

**WILD
DELIVERY**

Another way in which you can annoy and aggravate the batsman to a great extent is by purposely throwing wild balls. This maneuver must be cautiously indulged in, however,

in order not to give the batsman his base on balls. A throw entirely behind the batsman is often a good investment. It causes him to think that you are of no account as a pitcher and that his chances for getting hit by the ball are fair.

Never throw a wild ball slowly. Send it in at the top of your speed. If it is thrown slowly the batsman will at once see that it is a "put-up job," and it will fail to disconcert him as it otherwise would.

.. ..

**FIRST BALL
A "STRIKE"**

When a batsman takes his place at the bat it is generally pretty safe to make the first ball a "strike." If he appears green or inattentive a swift, straight ball can be delivered. If, on the contrary, he is watchful and attentive, deliver a swift ball with the "in-drop" curve and run the risk of his hitting it. If it is skillfully delivered, ten to one he has a strike on him. The chances are that he won't try to hit it. Then follow it with two or three wild throws, unless there are base runners in the field. By the time three wild pitches have been made, the batsman will have become sufficiently demoralized to allow of two fair balls being thrown in succession with comparative safety, provided a different curve is given to each one. It will hardly do to try three fair balls in succession.

.. ..

**USE JUDG-
MENT IN EACH
CASE**

In following these, as well as all other tactics, you must exercise your own judgment as to what each individual case requires, and must be guided more by that than by any printed directions that can be compiled.

.. ..

**CATCHING
THE BATSMAN
UNPREPARED**

If the ball is delivered to the batsman before he is ready for it, or when he is not expecting it, he is said to be caught "out of form." There are several ways in which this tactic can be performed, but they all amount to one thing—that is, pitching the ball when the batsman is not prepared to strike it. One way, but by no means the most important, is to throw it instantly after the batsman takes his position and before he has braced himself to strike. This requires very little skill or practice on the part of the pitcher, and with inexperienced batsmen is generally quite effective.

PITCHING It is sometimes a good idea to change the delivery from swift curves to slow drop balls, especially if the outfielders are active, and reliable catchers of fly balls. In delivering drop balls be careful to pitch them pretty high and to have them pass the batsman as high as his shoulder.

A ball at the waist, or just below, can be hit with the full strength of the batsman and a "home run" will be likely to be the result. But a ball hit at the shoulder will seldom be struck a great distance, for it is very awkward for most batsmen to hit a ball as high as that.

.. ..

"HOME-RUN BUNTERS" EASILY "TAKEN IN" This feature of strategy is worthy of special attention, although it will not always be successful by any means. The class who are most likely to be "taken in" by it are those who delight in a "home run," and who cannot resist the temptation to "lift" it for all they are worth. A scientific batsman, however, will not try to take more than one base on such a ball unless the prospects for making more are especially good.

.. ..

CHANGE OF PITCHERS This can be frequently practiced to advantage, but I would advise a change of catchers at the same time. My reasons for giving such advice are that it puts two fresh men in the positions and the batsmen are now encountering men whose actions and devices are new to them, for they may work together in a manner totally unlike those whose places they have taken.

A "rattled" team is not much better than one which is already whipped, so far as the results of the game are concerned. But neither pitcher nor catcher should be changed so long as they are doing well enough where they are.

.. ..

DIFFERENT STYLE OF DELIVERY It will often be found very advantageous to change the style of delivery from an underhand to an overhand throw. This move will so astonish some batsmen that they will forget to strike at the ball as it goes by.

.. ..

WATCHING THE BASES This forms an important part of a pitcher's work. In doing it he can be greatly assisted by the catcher, who faces the whole field, and who can, perhaps, better judge when it is proper to throw to a base. Although observation has taught that in throwing to a base the chances are largely in favor of the base runner, yet whenever an opportunity

offers which is likely to prove successful the ball should be thrown to the base without an instant's hesitation. To this end the pitcher and catcher should have a separate sign for throwing to each base which the pitcher should be able to read as easily and quickly as he can read the letters of the alphabet.

.. ..

MAN ON FIRST AND THIRD

When there is a base runner on first base and another on third the pitcher must not let the former draw his attention entirely away from the latter, especially when the score is about even. This, in almost every case, is only a ruse to allow the man on third to make his run. If the pitcher sees that this latter individual is very eager to get home he can make a sudden feint to throw to first, and if the man at third is an inexperienced player he will be very likely to make a dash for the home plate before he sees that he has been "sold." If this happens he is easily caught between bases and put out. If the ruse fails no particular harm has been done.

.. ..

HOW TO GET THE GREATEST POSSIBLE CURVES

As we have already fully demonstrated, the revolving motion of the ball is what produces the curve, and the amount of curve will be governed by the degree of rotary motion imparted to the ball. It therefore stands to reason that whatever will tend to increase a revolving motion should be eagerly sought for and when found used. This rotation, as everybody will understand, is produced by the friction of the fingers on the ball. Increasing the friction increases the rotary motion, and of course increases the curve. To produce this very desirable result it is only necessary to use some sticky substance which will cause the fingers to adhere to the ball, and the results will be agreeably surprising. A drop or two of very thick varnish rubbed over the inside of the hand used in pitching, is as good as anything I ever tried. Pulverized rosin is good—the heat of the hand having a tendency to keep it in a sticky state.

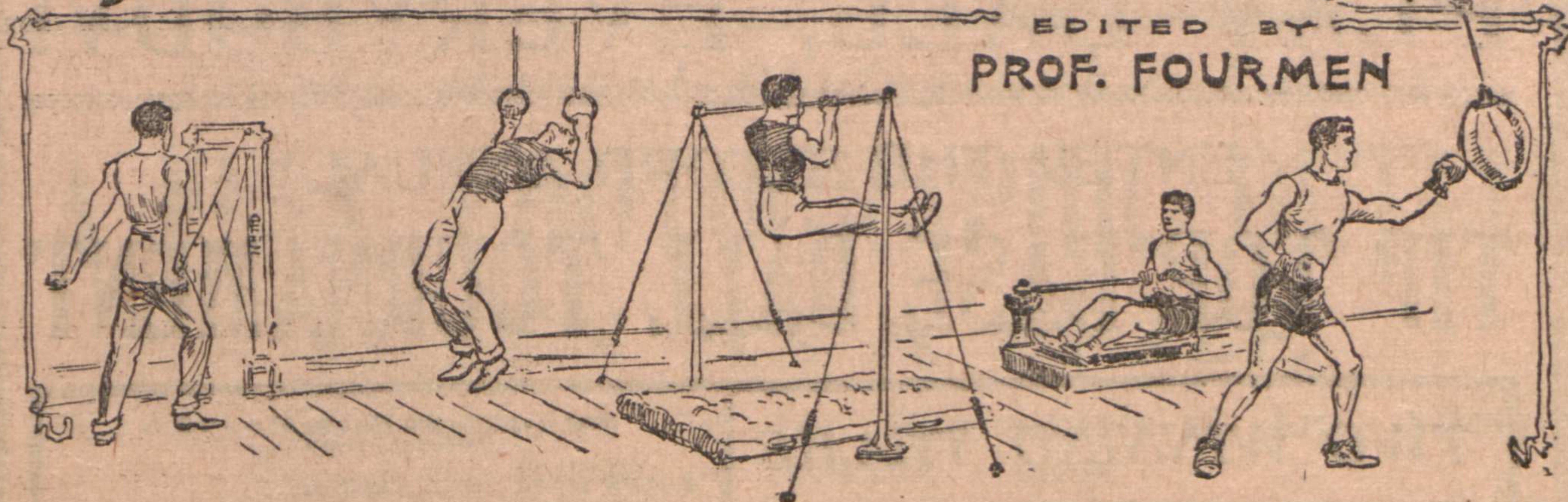
Not only do these agents produce much better curves, but they prevent the ball from slipping from the hand and thus producing unintentional wild throws. Whatever substance is used should be applied chiefly to the inside of the fingers; also to the thumb, especially where the "out-curve" and "up-curve" are much used, as in these curves the thumb is used to twist the ball out of the hand.

Next week's Physical Culture Department will contain an interesting article, entitled

"HOW TO BECOME A GOOD SCIENTIFIC BATTER."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

EDITED BY
PROF. FOURMEN



Prof. Fourmen: I want to ask you what you think of the exercises which I take and my measurements. I get up at six o'clock, take fifteen minutes with dumb-bells, then five with Whitely grip machine. Then I take a cold sponge bath. Is health bread good to eat? Are milk and hot water good to drink? My work consists mostly of walking in and out of the store. Should I take a walk after supper when I have been walking all day and feel pretty tired? Is eight to nine hours sleep enough for me? I am 16 years old, weight, 123 pounds; height, 5 feet 8 inches. Please tell me if my weight agrees with my height. Chest, uninflated, 29 inches; inflated, 33 inches; girth of waist, 26 inches; girth of right thigh, 19 inches; girth of left thigh, 19 inches; girth of right calf, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; girth of left calf, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; girth of right arm, 10 inches; girth of left arm, 10 inches; girth of right forearm, 10 inches; girth of left forearm, 10 inches. Hoping to see this in the Tip Top, I remain,

A WOULD-BE ATHLETE.

Your plan of exercising in the morning followed by cold sponge is a good one. Yes, health bread and the milk and warm water are good articles of diet. If you are on your feet a good deal during the day a walk at night is not necessary. You get enough sleep when you have nine hours. Your weight could be increased from ten to twenty pounds. Your measurements seem good, but there should be more difference between your arm and forearm.

Prof. Fourmen: I am a constant reader of the Tip Top, so I would like to ask a favor of you. I am 16 years 9 months old. Am 5 feet 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and weigh 122 pounds. My measurements are: Neck, 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; chest, normal, 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; chest, expanded, 36 inches; waist, 28 inches; thighs, 19 inches; calves, 13 inches; biceps, 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; forearm, 10 inches; wrists, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. 1. How are my measurements? 2. I think I am under weight, but how can I become heavier? Thanking you in advance, I remain, yours truly,

H. WEBER.

1. Your measurements are good.
2. You are underweight, and I advise a general course of training.

Prof. Fourmen: As I have read Tip Top, the King of Weeklies, for about three years, I take the privilege of asking you a few questions. I am 16 years old and am 5 feet 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches tall. 1. How much should I weigh? I exercise twenty minutes every morning and night. 2. Do I exercise enough? The things I use are dumb-bells, Indian clubs and punching bag. 3. Is milk good? 4. What is good for round shoulders? Yours truly,

A TIP TOP ADMIRER.

1. About 135 pounds.
2. I would advise a course of training, but twenty minutes night and morning is a beneficial amount of time.
3. For some people; in others it causes biliousness.
4. Stand erect always and use Whitely exercisers and dumb-bells.

Prof. Fourmen: Being a constant reader of Tip Top, I wish to ask a few questions and your advice. Two friends and I are going to train our bodies. First, we are going to get a punching bag. I would like you to tell me how it can be put up on the

sleepers in the cellar. I am the shortest of my friends, and am 5 feet tall. How high from the ground should it be put for me? Also, what is the best way to put a partition in front of it, so as not to skin the bag? The idea of this partition is so the bag can bounce back and hit us if we are not quick enough. Next, we are going to get boxing gloves. Now, don't you think it is best to begin slowly at first and go swifter as we progress? I am a great smoker, and would like to quit the habit, as I think nobody can be a good, strong person if he smokes; would you kindly tell me the best way to quit this habit, as it is hard on my heart, etc.? Will you kindly answer these questions? I remain,

EDW. B. AUGUSTINE.

Read my article on "Bag Punching," to be found in No. 281 Tip Top. It will give all the information you desire. Yes, it is wise to begin training now, and gradually, too, as you get better results. The only advice I can give in regard to smoking is STOP IT. It is a pernicious habit, and will have many bad effects. Stop it at once!

Prof. Fourmen: Having taken considerable interest in your manner of answering questions, and being an admirer of Tip Top, I will cause you the trouble of answering a few questions. I am 16 years 3 months old, 5 feet 5 inches tall and weigh 112 pounds. My neck is 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; arm, 11 inches; forearm, 10 inches; chest, normal, 32 inches; expanded, 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; waist, 29 inches; thigh, 18 inches; leg, 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. How are my measurements and my weight? I can run for a considerable distance without much exertion, and can move at a lively pace. I take work in a gymnasium twice a week, for 45 minutes at a time. I ride a bicycle quite a great deal, and play football and baseball. I can lift 300 pounds or thereabouts. But I would like very much to become strong and muscular. I am moderately strong, and am in excellent health, considering the health of this city. I have used tobacco in all its forms for some time past, but have decided to "cut it out" in the future. I think I would know how to appreciate a strong and muscular body, if once I possessed one. I think you are doing excellent work, professor, and you will be thanked by many in time to come for the good work done them by means of your advice. In my opinion, you are a very good instructor. Well, as it is nearing resting time, I will retire, with sincere regards to yourself, Street & Smith, Dick and all characters concerned. A true friend,

J. D. R.

You are underweight, otherwise your measurements are good. Try a course of training and exercise every morning and evening. It will benefit you greatly. I would stop the lifting. It is injurious to try to lift such heavy weights. That is right, cut the tobacco out by all means, and do not use it again.

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NAMES OF TEAM		POSITION	NAMES OF TEAM
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		Catcher	
		1st Base	
		2d Base	
		3d Base	
		Short Stop	
		R. Field	
		C. Field	
		L. Field	
Winner _____		Final Score _____	Manager _____

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